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THE INSPIRATION OF OUR FAITH

(THE) INSPIRATION OF OUR FAITH: SERMONS.

By
JOHN WATSON, D.D.
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Author of "The Mind of the Master," "Beside the Bonnie Brier Bush," etc.

SECOND EDITION

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To
James Oswald Dykes
with
Respect and Gratitude

12779

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I

THE INSPIRATION OF OUR FAITH

"Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment."—*St. John* xii. 3.

BOTH religion and poetry breathe a common air, and rule over a common kingdom. They have to do with visions which love alone can realize, with questions to which reason has no answer, with feelings which elude expression in words.

Fancies that broke through language and escaped.

The Saint and the Poet are both born from above, and by their inner sight they behold two worlds. They have their being in the perfect ideal of this visible life. Unto them belong "the original gift of spreading the atmosphere of the ideal world around forms, incidents, and situations, of which for the common view custom had bedimmed all the lustre, and dried up the sparkle and the dewdrops." Religion robbed of emotion is a system of philosophy, or a code of morals,

without imagination or inspiration. It may be potent within a provincial sphere, it can never be universal and omnipotent. The angels do not sing over its coming; their legions are not ready for its aid.

No religion has ever been touched with so beautiful an emotion as Christianity. Its sacred book opens with a garden where the soul of man walks with God in the shadow of the trees before it goes out on a long wander year, and closes with another garden whither the soul returns after its bitter travail, white and victorious. A world, foul with sin, is hidden beneath the deluge, on whose black waste of waters floats the Ark of God with a remnant of the race, and the angel of death smites the firstborn of the oppressor, that the oppressed may go free. The waters of the sea stand in crystal banks to allow the people of God to escape; the newborn nation is fed with manna from Heaven, and water from the flinty rock; and they come at last into a land flowing with milk and honey. The earth is full of voices and revelations to spiritual souls, and the visible world becomes the parable of God. The Eternal will yet set up His kingdom among men, and the sufferings of the

race are to end in an age of gold, when there will be nothing to destroy in all God's holy mountain, and a little child will lead men captive. The Old Testament moves forward with a rhythmic step to the coming of the Messiah.

It was fitting that Jesu's own life should be heralded with singing, the song of angels, the Magnificat, and the Hymn of Simeon, for from beginning to end it was an idyll. If the mighty archangel who stands in the presence of God announced His coming, the young child was born among beasts of burden, and cradled in a manger. At twelve years old He amazed the doctors in the Temple by His questions, at thirty years He is tempted of the Devil in the wilderness. He comes from the waters of the Jordan, where He has taken up the burden of His life, to change the water into wine at a marriage feast. Unto appearance He is the poorest of men; without a home of His own, eating the plainest food, living with the lowliest people. Yet men fell back from before His face, death yields up its prey at a word, the sick gather for healing to His feet, the very winds and waves obey Him. What devotion of the people to Him, what dark conspiracy of enemies against Him,

what picturesque interviews with inquiring souls, what lonely hours on the mountain side! What a tragedy of suffering, what a triumph of goodness! Without the learning of the schools He confounded the Rabbis, with the simplest of images He taught the deepest truths. Along the paths of the country, on the grass of the mountain side, from fishing boats, in village synagogues, in the High Priest's palace, and in the Temple of great Jerusalem He delivered His soul.

> Across the sea, along the shore,
> In numbers more and ever more,
> From lonely hut and busy town
> The valley through the mountain down.
> What was it ye went out to see,
> Ye silly folk of Galilee?
> The reed that in the wind doth shake,
> The weed that washes in the lake,
> The reeds that wave, the weeds that float,
> A young man preaching in a boat.

The same emotion touches that society which Jesus created, and which we call sometimes the Church and sometimes the Kingdom of God. Every member is a son of God, and a brother with all his fellow Christians: he is a servant in the work of God, and a soldier in God's battle. Imperfect to sight he is a saint in idea, and though

he be as poor as Christ on earth, yet he is an heir of God. To him belong great treasures, where the thief cannot steal, and his future dwelling is our Father's House. Dying, he sees the heavens open, and Jesus at God's right hand, or living he beholds the new Jerusalem come down from Heaven as a bride adorned for her husband. Tortured in the Roman arena, or burning at the stake, he sings hymns of triumph, counting it all joy to suffer for Christ. From time to time this emotion bursts forth like a new spring and makes green the wilderness of the Church. St. Francis forms his order of poverty, and St. Bernard sings hymns of praise to Jesus. Xavier in his missionary zeal stretches out his hands to the far East and cries, "More sufferings, Lord, more sufferings." The Moravians surrender their goods, and go forth to conquer the Arctic regions for Christ. Father Damien dies with his lepers, and Livingstone falls on sleep upon his knees in Africa. The women of the Salvation Army nurse the outcasts of society, and crowds of people are moved by an evangelist as when the wind sweeps over ripe corn. Christianity takes for its symbol the Cross on which its Founder died, and by the victory of humility

Christianity has conquered. Our faith has only two rites—in one the baptized buries the past and begins life as a new creature; in the other communicants are united in one fellowship of suffering with Christ and His disciples, and pass from hand to hand

> The Holy Cup
> With all its wreathen stem of passion flowers
> And quivering sparkles of the ruby stars.

What do you call this? Fact, doctrine, conduct? Surely, but something else and something more. It is poetry, the most revealing and the most inspiring which our ears have heard. Christianity is not founded on logic but on passion. We are not moved by argument but by devotion. Christianity is a sublime emotion. When that ceases for a time our religion dies down to the roots, as in winter time: when there comes a baptism of new feeling Christianity bursts into spring. It was the great achievement of Schleiermacher, to distinguish religion from knowledge, declaring that "quantity of knowledge is not quantity of piety," and also to distinguish religion from morality, for "while morality always shows itself as manipulated, piety appears as a surrender."

When your material is human life you can do nothing of the first order unless you call emotion into play. While a law stands it must be obeyed, but if it be unjust you make your appeal from law to righteousness, for law is only a code, righteousness is a passion. We make provision for the poor and they receive bread according to rules, but let some sudden tragedy overwhelm our fellow men, then we appeal to pity. We are not assessed by tax gatherers, we assess ourselves by love. Relief is a regulation, pity is a passion. When the national affairs move with regular ebb and flow, politics are sufficient. When the commonwealth is among the breakers we cast ourselves on patriotism. Politics are but a system, patriotism is a passion. If a province of the Empire be orderly we ask ability of its ruler; if a province be discontented we demand sympathy. You can manage without emotion, you cannot change; you can carry on, you cannot create.

Is it not emotion which dignifies human life? Without its play friendship would be only acquaintance, marriage would be a social partnership, parents would be legal guardians and the home would be an hotel. Without emotion human society is

a joint-stock company, with it society is the family of God. Every movement which has stirred the depths of life, and changed the face of history, has sprung from some profound sentiment. Love for Jesus established Christianity on the ruins of the Roman empire, and saved civilization from anarchy. The same passion swept over Europe like a tidal wave, sending forth the chivalry of Christendom to redeem the holy sepulchre from the Moslem. It was a mingled passion of indignation and pity, kindled by the earnestness of Wilberforce, and fed in later years by Mrs. Stowe's novels and Whittier's poetry which struck the shackles off the slave. We ourselves have seen the geography of Eastern Europe recast, Germany united, Italy redeemed, Greece delivered from the Turks by the spirit of nationality. And we have seen the heart of our own people wake at last to the suffering of the poor, and a newborn sympathy do more in ten years than could have been done in fifty by law. Rely upon reason and conscience alone, and refuse the aid of emotion, and you could not have social reform, the emancipation of the slave, national freedom, or Christianity itself.

Is it not disappointing that the chief charm of

our religion has been often filched away from us, sometimes by dogmatic theologians, sometimes by unliterary critics? The idyll of the Garden of Eden has been reduced to a legal negotiation with parties and parchment, with seals and conditions. The inspired visions of prophets have been precipitated into theological science. The exquisite sayings of Jesus are tortured into the shape of dogmas. And squalid ecclesiastical controversies between Catholics and Protestants are thrust into the magnificence of the Apocalypse. What avails that wealth of spiritual beauty which has created modern literature, architecture, painting, and music, if those who love it place their Scriptures on the level of the six books of *Euclid?*

Another school less theological and more critical spend their strength in analysing the documents. They reject the miraculous and minimize the romantic till Christ be only another Rabbi, and nothing remains of His teaching but a few fragments. Christianity for this kind of man is only another parchment. The wild-flowers that one saw yesterday wet with dew are to-day dried and ticketed in a herbarium. No doubt the two schools proceed on different principles and have different

ends in view, but they both accomplish the same result. They reduce poetry to prose, and in the process Christianity ceases to convey half her truth, and loses all her fascination. For now our faith hardens into a scholastic creed or shrivels into a few severely edited fragments of literature. The picture is so many feet of canvas; the angel is a piece of marble, the regimental flag a yard of cloth. It is not by such things the soul is stirred or life is changed. The spikenard has been sold for three hundred pence, and there is no fragrance in the house.

Some persons, however, are haunted with a suspicion that in so far as you exalt the emotions of Christianity you undermine its reality. They prefer the ten words of Moses as recorded in the Pentateuch to their interpretation in the Sermon on the Mount and are more at home among the Proverbs of Solomon than with the parables of Jesus. Both the rhetoric of the prophets and the imagery of Jesus have been a perplexity to them, and they are never content till the clusters of grapes have been stripped from the branches and the richness thereof bottled in creeds. They are afraid that when one passes from prose into poetry he is

leaping from the solid rock into the air. They do not understand that emotion can bring us into regions of truth which reason cannot reach, and that a parable of Jesus may be quite as much in touch with fact and therefore quite as true as an article in a confession. Instead of poetry being less charged with truth than prose it is the other way, for poetry comes in where prose has given up the struggle. If truth be perfectly commonplace then it may be stated in the most prosaic style, but there are truths, especially in religion, which defy ordinary means of expression, because they are so subtle and spiritual. What cannot be achieved by speech may be attained by painting or music, wherein the thoughts of which we have been hardly conscious are expressed for us and embodied. And this has been done for religion in the emotion of our faith. The *Te Deum* is not less but more true than the Athanasian Creed, the "In Memoriam" of Tennyson than Butler's Analogy, George Herbert's Poems than the Confession of Faith. For any one to suppose that in religion emotion is an unsafe guide is to believe that a land surveyor's plan of Heaven would give us a truer idea than the revelation of St. John. When we

move through the prophecies of Isaiah or the conversations of Jesus, we are not being taught by catechism, but we are living in an atmosphere which passes through the pores of the soul.

Other people are apt to suspect that emotion is an alternative to action, but emotion rightly directed is the highest motive power. What can never be accomplished by the most convincing argument or the keenest sense of duty can be wrought by the impulse of love. A mother will make sacrifices which no one can ask of a nurse; the best drilled conscript will never touch the heroism of a patriot fighting for his home; the true artist who serves art as Jacob for Rachel will expend labour on his work you could never obtain from a hireling. The action which is charged with emotion has an engaging beauty, and to emotion must be credited the great successes of life. Without the teaching of Fichte Germany had not girded her loins afresh to face the first Napoleon; had Mazzini never wrote, Garibaldi had never delivered Italy. Beecher from his pulpit did as much as Lincoln with his armies to free the slaves. First there is the emotion which sets men's hearts on fire, and then there is the deed. Christianity

obtained her martyrs, and won her victories, not because men reasoned that Christ was the Son of God, or concluded that His law was the most perfect righteousness, but because multitudes of ordinary people loved Him with all their heart and were prepared to die for Him. When women like Mary gave the best that they possessed to Christ in the hour of His defeat, and before He was crucified poured over Him the spikenard of their love, the future of Christianity was assured, and Christ already had ascended His Throne.

II

ENTHUSIASM

"They said: 'He is beside Himself.'"—*St. Mark* iii. 21.

MANY years ago some of us were much impressed by a little work entitled *Modern Christianity a Civilized Heathenism*, and it still lies upon one minister's shelf—to be taken as a tonic when one's religious constitution is relaxed. It is an extreme book, but the anonymous author fairly makes his chief point when he insists that the difference between Christ and Christians is that the Master was always in deadly earnest, and that we are generally tepid; and when he points out that Christianity does not suffer to-day at the hands of the world because it is so soft and inoffensive, but that if it followed in the steps of Jesus Christianity would again be cast out from society. His most bitter passage is a comparison between two clergymen, one who is concerned with the innocent pleasures of life, and has a tender regard for his dinner, and another who has surren-

dered everything for Christ and dies of fever caught in the discharge of duty. "Mad," says the author, coming to his climax, "simply means different from other people; and if Jesus lived in our days, Christians would be so astonished at His conduct that they would put Him in an asylum."

This point has been made by two other free lances of our time, by Laurence Oliphant in his *Piccadilly*, and by Mrs. Lynn Linton in her *Joshua Davidson*. It is indeed a point which comes very handy to the candid critics of the Christian Church, and which in certain moods must give every sincere Christian cause for uneasy thought.

Our text reminds us that the situation actually occurred in Jesu's life, and was not the least painful in His experience. He was inured to insult and abuse, but there are strokes which pierce the heart. When Jesu's own mother and brethren came at the moment of high popularity, and explained that He was not in His senses, it was a stroke of Satanic cruelty. And what lent bitterness to the incident was this—they did not object to His work, but to the spirit in which He did it. They would have wished Him to do God's will cautiously—being careful about His meat and

drink; they were dismayed because He did God's will intently, forgetting Himself altogether. Jesus was counted mad simply because He was enthusiastic, and the incident is therefore typical. Our Master illustrates that passion for religion which is prepared to sacrifice everything, even life itself, in the service of God, and His family represents for the time, the worldly mind which regarded Him with angry suspicion and has been pouring cold water on enthusiasm ever since. Two states of mind are contrasted—one inspired and self-forgetful, the other prosaic and self-regarding. And they will always be in collision.

One does not mean in saying this that passion has been an inseparable feature of Christian character or that the thermometer has always stood at blood heat in the Christian Church. It were not difficult to find congregations so self-controlled that they are little better than an aquarium of cold-blooded animals, and individuals who are in no more danger of excitement than a marble statue. In the eighteenth century they used to praise a person on his tombstone because he exhibited religion without enthusiasm, and even later it was necessary to write books in defence of enthusiasm.

Thousands of Christian folk of our own time regard religious emotions with grave distrust, and are ever making a plea for decorous piety. Whatever may be said of their correct and well bred ideals, it is worth remembering that upon their conditions the kingdom of God would never have existed and that if enthusiasm died out the obituary of the Christian Church should be prepared without delay. From time to time a tide of emotion has swept through the Church, cleansing her life from the pollution of the world and lifting it to a higher spiritual level, as when the ocean fills the bed of a shrunken river with its wholesome buoyant water. Every such springtime has been a lift to religion, and has been condemned as madness by the world. It was a tolerant world before which St. Paul stood when he was tried by Festus, one that could appreciate manliness and honesty. Festus indeed was full of respect for Paul, but the moment the apostle introduced his religion the Roman spoke with another voice. It was not so much that Christianity was dangerous as that it was unintelligible. It belonged to another order of things, and St. Paul was beyond his ken. "Much learning doth make thee mad," said the Roman magistrate. Centuries

passed and there came a day when the forgiveness of sins was sold for money, and the morals of the clergy were an open scandal. Luther arose and pled for the cleansing of the Temple, and the Festus of the time was not angry with his Paul. "Brother Luther," said the Pope, "has a fine genius;" by which he meant that Luther was crazy, and they also said in Rome that if Christianity were a fable it was at least a profitable one. One sees the perpetual contrast in Luther and in Pope Leo X—the passion of faith and the composure of culture. The spirit of God stirred amid the dry bones of England in the eighteenth century when great ladies offered themselves to the service of Jesus, and the faces of colliers were washed white by the tears of penitence. And we know what the respectable and religious world said: "low follies," "a man out of Bedlam," "a windmill in their heads," "fools," and "fanatics." One does not count such words as evidence against Wesley and Whitefield; he immediately concludes that spring has succeeded winter, and that the Church has been afresh endued with power.

But we must not run away with the idea that in criticizing enthusiasm the world is deliberately

criticizing Christianity. The historical attitude of the world to religion is one of large toleration, and somewhat less sympathy. Religion is an instinct and must be fulfilled just as a man must eat and drink. Let every man therefore get a religion which will suit him, and let him hold his tongue. It is after all an irksome necessity, and if you are fortunate enough to find any kind of god with whom you can live on good terms, be thankful, but do not trouble your neighbor with your private affairs. "A Catholic are you? Very good. A Protestant? Quite so. Recently I have become a Theosophist. Really!" The world yawns, for it is not interested in your religious fancies. You are at liberty to be anything you like provided you are not troublesome. One may also admit that the world has a kindly feeling to organized Christianity. It likes an aesthetic Church, and has no objection to a Christian minister if he be a cultured man. It will say the Apostles' Creed on occasion provided you do not attach any definite meaning to a number of the clauses, and considers the Burial Service the most decent way of closing a man's career. A conventional Christian will have no difficulty in coming to terms with the world; his difficulty will begin

when he meets the eye of Christ. But suppose one is so possessed with the spirit of Jesus that he insists on carrying Christianity through his thinking, his business, his home life, his politics, you have another state of affairs. His friends may not say that he is insane, and they will not willingly persecute him, but they will lift their eyebrows and remark that this kind of thing is imprudent for a man with a wife and six children. They may even feel it their duty to take him aside some day and speak to him as one who is overstrained. Had St. Paul contented himself with a theological discussion about Jesus in rabbinical circles, he would have been left in peace, and we might never have heard his name. But when he counted all things but loss for Jesus Christ, then even the tolerant Roman Government was obliged to suppress him. Had Luther written respectful notes to his Holiness hoping that he would consider the state of the Church in his leisure moments he would have got a letter from a secretary saying that his Holiness was obliged for his communication. When he nailed his challenge to the church doors of Wittemberg there remained nothing now but war to the death. One may regret that the peace of society should be

broken by religion, but the Kingdom of God stands in enthusiasm, and in the last issue it is justified in all her children.

There are two convincing pleas for enthusiasm and the first is its reasonableness. A man may be keen about many interests, but of all things he ought to be keenest about religion. We are indulgent to enthusiasm in many departments, from football to collecting matchboxes, and are willing to give to every innocent fad a good-natured benediction. Why should this polite tolerance for every man's hobby harden into persecution when his mania is the Kingdom of God? Why should a gladiator be sane and St. Paul be mad? Ah, the reason is not obscure. What is eccentricity but motion from a different centre? There is the centre of things unseen and eternal, and the centre of the things seen and temporal, and the lives pivoted on those two points cannot be harmonized. Suppose thirty years ago that a scientist had told a rustic that we should soon be able to speak to people in Paris through a wire, the rustic would have left his company with celerity, and kept his children off the road for that day. But the scientist was only a few years ahead of the people, and the boldest Christian

dreamer is only anticipating the good time which is coming. Place a dozen cold-blooded and hard-headed men in a meeting of the Salvation Army when the Army is on fire, and they will think of Bedlam. Take half a dozen Salvation soldiers to the Bourse of Paris when there is a crisis in European affairs, and the Salvation men will be aghast. Madness must be defined by the standard of sanity. If any one believes that the Kingdom of God will remain when this world has disappeared like a shadow, then he is right to fling away all that he possesses, and himself too, for its advancement and victory.

My second plea for enthusiasm is its success. Take if you please the enthusiast who has not always been perfectly wise, and whose plans any one can criticize; the man who has not had tangible success. It does not follow that the cause of God is condemned in him or has lost by him. There is something more important than results which can be tabulated in reports; there is the spirit which inspires action and without which there will be no report to write. Unless enthusiasm is stored on the high water-shed there will be no stream to drive the mills in the valley below. "It

is magnificent," said a French officer when the six hundred charged at Balaclava, "but it is not war." Certainly it was magnificent, and perhaps it was war. Those heroes will never be forgotten in English literature or in the annals of the English race. They fell at our Thermopylae, and as long as the English flag flies the charge of the Light Brigade will quicken our pulses. Gordon's death was a calamity, but it was not waste. Without his self-forgetful devotion we should have lost one of the most inspiring examples for our officers, and for the young men of our congregation; we should not have Gordon institutions throughout the land, and a heartening message for our lads. When a knight dies in his steel armour it does not matter much in the long result whether he lost or won. Every one who saw him fall, fearless to the last, leaves the lists with a higher idea of manhood.

We are hag-ridden in the Church of God by the idea of machinery, and we forget that the motive power of religion is inspiration. Boards are an excellent device for management, they are helpless for creation. No resolution of any court, however cleverly drawn up, can produce a prophet or a martyr. He comes from God and does his work

in his own way; he is severely criticized by all kinds of futile people, and then he returns to give in his account to God. Was it failure when the men of the Church Missionary Society died at Uganda, and the men of the Baptist Mission fell one after another on the Congo? It was high failure, that kind which turns the world upside down. You can always get prudent people; they are at a discount in their multitude. "The world," some one has said, "is filled with the proverbs of a base prudence which adores the rule of three, which never subscribes, which never gives, which seldom lends, and only asks one question—Will it bake bread?" What we have to search for high and low is imprudent people, self-forgetful, uncalculating, heroic people. "Give me," says another, "one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such men will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of God upon earth." Were the infection of enthusiasm to spread over the Kirk we should see the Kingdom of God coming with leaps and bounds.

Has God baptized any of my readers into this spirit? Be thankful that in an age of indifference,

when enthusiasm has departed from literature and politics, the good fire is burning in your hearts. Do not give any heed to the criticism of cool or clever people. You have other spectators than this present world; a cloud of witnesses is bending over you and bidding you be of good cheer. If the world does not understand you they understand, for in their day they have suffered and conquered. If you do not hear their voices on account of the rabble's laughter, you will hear them in eternity's stillness, and if, carried away for the moment by the strength of the hostile tide, you fling up an empty hand to Heaven, it will be caught in the hand of Christ.

Has God denied you this gift of enthusiasm? Then do not hinder the enthusiast by your side; do not chill him with a spray of cheap common-sense, or discourage him by your friendly disapproval. If there be not in you the heart to plunge into the river and save the drowning man, then for Heaven's sake and your own sake do not stand on the bank and criticize the style of the swimmer who with labouring stroke is bringing his unconscious burden to the shore. Surely that is the meanest thing that any one from his coign of safety

can do. Can you not find somewhere in you a cheer for the gallant struggler? Will you not stretch out your hand to help him as he nears the bank? And will you not pray that God may touch your soul also with that fire which burned as a pure flame in the heart of Jesus, and has never quite died out from the heart of the Church?

Mastered by this madness Christ laid down His life for our salvation; by this madness the world is being redeemed.

III

OPTIMISM

"Go ye therefore and make Christians of all nations."—*St. Matthew* xviii. 19.

AMONG the characteristics of Jesu's teaching which have passed into the higher consciousness of Christianity is an inextinguishable optimism. When He was only a village prophet, Jesus declared that the social Utopia of Isaiah was already being fulfilled, and when He gave the Sermon on the Mount He spoke as a greater Moses, legislating not for a nation but for a race. If He called apostles they were to disciple every creature, and if He died it was for a world. His generation might condemn Him, but they would see Him again on the clouds of Heaven. His death would be celebrated in a sacrament unto every generation, and being lifted on a cross He would draw all men to Him. The apostles who failed in His lifetime would afterwards do greater works than Himself, and He Who departed from their sight would return in the Holy Ghost and be with them

for ever. He looks beyond His own land, and embraces a race in His plans. He ignores the defeats of His own ministry, and discounts the victory of His disciples. He teaches, commands, arranges, prophesies, with a universal and eternal accent. This was not because He made light of His task or of His enemies; no one ever had such a sense of the hideous tyranny of sin or passed through such a Gehenna, but Jesus believed with all His heart and mind in the Kingdom of God, that it was coming and must come. He held that the age of gold was not behind, but before humanity.

This high spirit has passed into the soul of Christ's chief servants. The directors and pioneers, the martyrs and exemplars of our faith have had no misgivings; the light of hope has ever been shining on their faces. St. Paul boasted that he was a freeborn Roman, but he was prouder to be a member of Christ's commonwealth, whose capital was in Heaven, and in which all nations were one. He was a loyal subject of Caesar, but he owned a more magnificent emperor at God's right hand. Above the forces of this present world he saw the principalities and powers in the heavenly places

fighting for his faith. Scourged and imprisoned he burst into psalms, and he looked beyond his martyrdom to the crown of righteousness. Shackled to a soldier he wrote letters brimming over with joy, and confined to a barrack room he caught through a narrow window the gleam of the eternal city. Never did he flinch before a hostile world, never was he brow-beaten by numbers, never was he discouraged by failure or reverse. He knew that he was on the winning side, and that he was laying the foundation of an everlasting state. You catch the same grand note in St. Augustine with all his horror of prevailing iniquity; in the medieval hymn writers celebrating Jerusalem the Golden, when clouds of judgment hung over their heads; and in the missionaries of the faith who toiled their life through without a convert, and yet died in faith. They might be losing but their Commander was winning. The Cross might be surrounded with the smoke of battle, it was being carried forward to victory.

They were right in this conviction, but do not let us make any mistake about the nature of this triumph, else we shall be caught by delusions, and in the end be much discouraged. It will not be

ecclesiastical, and by that one means that no single Church, either the Church of Rome, or the Church of England, or the Church of Scotland will ever embrace the whole human race, or even its English-speaking province. One cannot study Church History since the Reformation, or examine the condition of the various religious denominations to-day without being convinced that there will always be diversity of organization, and any person who imagines the Church of the East making her humble submission to Rome, or the various Protestant bodies of the Anglo-Saxon race trooping in their multitude to surrender their orders to the Anglican Church has really lost touch with the possibilities of life. Nor will the triumph be theological in the sense that all men will come to hold the same dogma whether it be that of Rome or Geneva. There will always be many schools of thought within the Kingdom of God just as there will be many nations. Neither one Church nor one creed will swallow up the others and dominate the world. He who cherishes that idea is the victim of an optimism which is unreasonable and undesirable. The Kingdom of God will come not through organization but through inspiration. Its

sign will not be the domination of a Church, but the regeneration of humanity. When man to man shall brother be the world over, and war shall no longer drench cornfields with blood: when women are everywhere honoured, and children are protected: when cities are full of health and holiness, and when the burden of misery has been lifted from the poor, then the world shall know Christ has not died in vain, and His vision shall be fulfilled.

A fond imagination which only tantalizes and disheartens! It is natural to say so, but magnificent dreams have come true. Suppose you had been on the sorrowful way when Jesus was being led to His doom, and women were pitying this innocent prophet whose hopes had been so rudely dashed, and whose life had been so piteously wasted. "Ah!" they cry, "His illusions have been scattered, and His brief day is going down in darkness." It appeared so, but was it so?

Suppose while the kind-hearted people were talking, some one had prophesied the career of Jesus. They would have laughed and called him a visionary, yet which would have been right, the people who judged by Jesu's figure beneath the

cross, or the man who judged Jesu's power through that cross? the people who looked at the mob of Jerusalem, or the man who saw the coming generations? There are two ideas of Christ's crucifixion in art, and each has its own place. There is the realistic scene with the cross raised only a few feet from the ground, a Jewish peasant hanging on it, a Roman guard keeping order, and a rabble of fanatical priests as spectators. That is a fact, if you please, down to the colour of the people's garments and the shape of the Roman spears. Very likely that is how it looked and happened. There is also the idealistic scene with a cross high and majestic on which Christ is hanging with His face hidden. Behind there is an Italian landscape with a river running through a valley, trees against the sky, and the campanile of a village church. At the foot of the cross kneels St. Mary Magdalene, on the right at a little distance are the Blessed Virgin and St. Francis, on the left St. John and St. Jerome. The Roman soldiers and the Jewish crowd and that poor cross of Roman making have disappeared as a shadow. The great cross of the divine Passion is planted in the heart of the Church and of the race for ever. Facts? Certainly, but

which is the fact, that or this? Which is nearer to the truth, the Christ of the sorrowful way or the Christ at God's right hand?

Have there been no grounds for optimism? Has the splendid hope of Christ been falsified? One may complain that the centuries have gone slowly, and that the chariot of righteousness has dragged upon the road. But Christ has been coming and conquering. There is some difference between the statistics of the Upper Room, and the Christian Church to-day; between slavery in the Roman Empire and to-day; between the experience of women in the pre-Christian period and to-day; between the reward of labour in Elizabeth's England and to-day; between the use of riches in the eighteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth; between pity for animals in the Georgian period and to-day. If we are not uplifted by this beneficent progress, it is because we have grown accustomed to the reign of Christianity, and are impatient for greater things. We are apt to be pessimists, not because the Kingdom of God is halting, but because it has not raced; not because the Gospel has failed to build up native churches in the ends of the earth with their own forms,

literature, martyrs, but because every man has not yet believed the joyful sound.

There are two grounds for the unbounded optimism of our faith, and the first is God. How did such ideas come into the human mind? Where did the imagination of the prophets and apostles catch fire? where is the spring of the prayers and aspirations of the saints? Whence do all light and all love come? Surely from God. Can we imagine better than God can do? Can we demand a fairer world than God will make? Were not the Greek philosophers right in thinking that our ideals are eternal, and are kept with God? It is not a question of our imagining too much, but too little, of being too soon satisfied.

> So soon made happy? Hadst thou learned
> What God accounteth happiness,
> Thou wouldst not find it hard to guess
> What hell may be his punishment
> For those who doubt if God invent
> Better than they.

The other ground for optimism is Jesus Christ. Does it seem that the perfect life for the individual, and for the race, is too sublime: that it is a distant and unattainable ideal? It is well enough to give the Sermon on the Mount, and true enough

that if it were lived the world would be like Heaven, but then has it ever been lived? Yes, once at least, and beyond all question. Christ lived as He taught. He bade men lose their lives and He lost His; He bade men trample the world under foot, and He trampled it; He commanded men to love, and He loved even unto death. This He did as the forerunner of the race. Why not again with Christ as Captain? Why not always, why not everywhere? Is not He the standard of humanity now, and is not He its Redeemer? Has He not been working in the saints who have reminded the world of God? Will He not continue to work till all men everywhere come to the stature of perfection?

Only one institution in human society carries the dew of its youth; and through the conflict of the centuries still chants its morning song. It is the religion of Jesus. I do not mean the Christianity which exhausts its energy in the criticism of documents, or the discussion of ritual—the Christianity of scholasticism, or ecclesiasticism, for there is no lift in that pedantry. I do not mean the Christianity which busies itself with questions of labour and capital, meat and drink, votes and politics, for there is no lift in that machinery. I

mean the Christianity which centres in the Person of the Son of God, with His revelation of the Father, and His Gospel of Salvation with His hope of immortality and His victory of soul. This Christianity endures while civilizations exhaust themselves and pass away, and the face of the world changes. Its hymns, its prayers, its heroism, its virtues, are ever fresh and radiant. If a man desires to be young in his soul let him receive the spirit of Jesus, and bathe his soul in the Christian hope. Ah, pessimism is a heartless, helpless spirit. If one despairs of the future for himself, and for his fellows, then he had better die at once. It is despair which cuts the sinews of a man's strength and leaves him at the mercy of temptation. Do you say what can I do, because the light round me is like unto darkness? Climb the mast till you are above the fog which lies on the surface of the water, and you will see the sun shining on the spiritual world, and near at hand the harbour of sweet content. True, we must descend again to the travail of life, but we return assured that the sun is above the mist. Do you say what is the use of fighting, for where I stand we have barely held our own? Courage! It was all you were expected to do, and

while you stood fast the centre has been won, and the issue of the battle has been decided. It was a poet who had his own experience of adversity, and was cut down in the midst of his days, who bade his comrades be of good cheer.

Say not, the struggle nought availeth,
The labour and the wounds are vain,
The enemy faints not nor faileth,
And as things have been they remain.

If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.
It may be in yon smoke concealed,
Your comrades chase e'en now the fliers,
And, but for you, possess the field.

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back, through creeks and inlets making,
Comes silent, flooding in, the main.

And not by eastern windows only,
When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front, the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward look, the land is bright.

IV

JESUS' CRITICISM OF EMOTION

"A certain man said unto Him 'Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.' And Jesus said unto him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'"—*St. Luke* ix. 57–58.

IF what is rare be remarkable, then this incident when Jesus refused three disciples is the most remarkable in His life, and comes upon us with a shock. One can find many occasions when Jesus encouraged men to become His disciples, no other when He set Himself to discourage them. His preaching was one long invitation to enter the Kingdom of God; He used to say with emphasis that He would cast none out: He made social pariahs welcome; He sat at meat with publicans. But it is evident that Jesus on occasion could be cold in manner, could damp out enthusiasm, refuse offers of allegiance, speak forbidding words, and close the gates of God's Kingdom in a man's face. Three

men heard Jesus preach, and were so moved that they resolved to join His fellowship. The first He repelled by an extreme illustration of the hardship of a disciple's lot—he would not have where to lay his head; the second He daunted with an almost impossible commandment—that he should leave without burying his father; the third He declared unfit for His Kingdom—because he wished to bid his friends farewell. This was the drastic way in which Jesus dealt with three apparently honest men.

The action of the Master is so unexpected that one begins to look below the surface for reasons, and the case of the Scribe, to go no farther, explains the situation. One gathers that he had been arrested, impressed, convinced, and finally carried away by the teaching of Jesus. What freshness, reality, insight, grace! Jesus of Nazareth is a prince of Rabbis, and must certainly found a new school. The Scribe will attach himself to this master of the future and become His follower. He will go with Him to the synagogues of Galilee or the Temples of Jerusalem. He will not be ashamed to stand by His side in great public controversies, or to support His doctrine. Unfortunately for the enthusiastic student this was not the kind of loyalty Christ asked from

His disciples: His demand was for something more practical and commonplace. Jesus was not a Rabbi, dazzling people with original views, and asking them to accept new creeds. He was a master calling on men to live a certain life, and to fulfil a certain law. His disciples were not to be students idolizing a brilliant teacher, but servants obeying a daily law. This Scribe must do more than change his opinions, he must change his company. His idea was to follow Christ's lead in the synagogue amid the debates of the learned; he must go with Christ to the field in the service of ordinary people. He was willing to put on Christ's doctrine as one puts on a fashionable dress. Was he ready to identify himself with Christ's society? "You wish," said Christ, "to be My disciple, and you think of discipleship from the Scribe's standpoint. Understand that wild animals live more comfortably than I. Is My cross as grateful as My creed?" We gather that it was not, and that the Scribe's exuberant impulse disappeared before this chilling prospect.

If it should seem that Christ dealt rather hardly with this overflowing Scribe, let us remind ourselves that it was in perfect keeping with His attitude to mere emotion. His teaching had always a keen edge

to that large class which is more inclined to gush than to do. There was a son who was most polite and said that he would go to till his father's vineyard, but he never went. That is emotion. There is a shallow soil in which the seed springs up suddenly, grows quickly and as soon as the sun has risen withers away. That is an emotional nature. There was a householder who made ambitious plans for a tower, and laid a big foundation, and could get no farther, and was laughed at for his foolishness. That is the feebleness of emotion. There were certain people who stood at the door of the Heavenly Kingdom, and expected to receive a welcome because they could say "Lord, Lord," but had no entrance because they had not done the will of God. That is the end of emotion. True emotion which resulted in brave action never failed to receive its meed of approbation from Jesus, to whom the tears of Mary Magdalene and the spikenard of Mary of Bethany were most dear. But Jesus was never weary of denouncing false emotion which ends with itself, and He has done all He could to save His disciples from its enticing snare.

The Master was not content to pillory this shallow feeling in parables; He did not spare it when it ap-

peared in those whom He loved, and considered sincere. No one appreciated more deeply the enthusiasm of women, none ever appealed more successfully to the immense devotion of a woman's nature. But none has ever been more faithful in warning women to bring their engaging sentiments to the touchstone of action. When Salome, motherlike, asked that her sons should sit on thrones in Christ's Kingdom, He reminded her that they must first drink His cup and be baptized with His baptism. When Jesu's words greatly moved some hearer's heart, and one cried out "Blessed is the woman that bore Thee," He could not let her pass without declaring another person still more blessed—the one who heard His Word and kept it. But never did Jesus so condemn fruitless emotion as on the way to the cross. The daughters of Jerusalem had been less than women if they had not wept when Jesus passed, weak with suffering, bearing on His body the marks of the scourging, and tottering beneath the weight of His cross. They did weep, but that day their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons had cried, "Crucify, crucify Him." It was rather late to pity Him now; their tears were a poor atonement for the crucifixion. Better now to weep for themselves, and

for their children, since the judgment of God must be hanging over fanatical Jerusalem. There is a vast difference between the tears of penitence and the tears of pity; between the women who afforded Christ a home and the women who came to look at Him in the "Sorrowful Way."

Certainly Jesus cannot be said to have encouraged emotion, and people of various kinds may benefit by His discipline. For instance, some person of refined nature is charmed by Jesu's teaching in the Gospels. He has never heard anything in literature or religion to compare with Jesu's parables, beatitudes, commandments, and discourses. Like the Scribe he also will be a Christian and will follow Christ anywhere, but is he prepared to be one with the Peters and Johns who make up the Christian society, and be their brother in the love of God? That is another matter. A second person with a sympathetic heart is much touched by Jesu's compassion for the miserables. No religion and no party is so full of pity, and so it must be good to be a Christian. Yes, but suppose that Christ should expect more than an æsthetic interest, that He should ask His disciples to make definite sacrifices for His sake. That is another matter. Or a third person has a quick sensi-

bility and is much affected by Christ's promise of mercy. But he forgets that not one sin can be forgiven until he has pardoned his own enemy, till he has abandoned his favourite vice, till he has made restitution for wrongdoing. That is another matter. Impulses to admire what is true, to sympathize with what is sad, and to be reconciled to God, are in themselves excellent, but let it be clearly understood that though Christianity may begin with feeling it must end in practice, and that the best thing for an enthusiastic person is to ask this question—Am I ready to share Christ's cross?

There are two reasons why Jesus was so critical of emotion, and so anxious that it should be rigidly tested, and one is that Christianity itself is charged with the most beautiful emotion. Some religions are not likely to excite any one, as for instance an ethical code. One can no more wax hot about morality than over the multiplication table. When a man has no more generous idea of religion than paying his debts, and going to church, he is in no danger of heated feelings. But Jesu's teaching is not a series of commonplaces, nor is His Kingdom a mechanical institution. His religion is an evangel, a revelation, a splendid imagination. When the spirit of Chris-

tianity touches our soul we must take care while we rejoice in the ideal that we lay stress on the real; while we set our sails to the favoring gale that we have a solid keel on our ship. It is good to believe in God's fatherhood if we keep within us a child's heart; good to teach human brotherhood if we be doing a brother's part; good to magnify the cross if we are carrying our own; good to think of Heaven if we have its earnest in holiness within. None could have heard the Sermon on the Mount without wishing to accept its persuasive principles, but Jesus warned His hearers that unless they carried His words into action they were building their house upon the sand, and He insisted that the house of the soul must stand on the rock of practical obedience.

The other reason springs from the constitution of human nature; emotion is so seductive. The heart has a more delightful climate than either the conscience or the reason, and they who make their home there are apt to be enervated. Enthusiasm about some good cause, admiration of some brave deed, sympathy with some tale of suffering, indignation at some flagrant wrong, even personal grief over some loss, are subtle pleasures. The nerves of the soul vibrate; we have the experience of a gentle electric

shock. People read sensational pictures, go to the theatre, follow criminal trials, and officiate at tragedies, because sensation is a luxury. Add religion to feeling and you raise it to its highest power. Nothing can be more agreeable to a sympathetic nature than to sing hymns of passion, to dwell on the love of God, and the sufferings of Christ, to talk about spiritual experiences and heavenly hopes. Nothing can be harder than denying ourselves, and keeping Christ's commandments, and serving others, and submitting to the divine grace. Nothing is more severe than duty, nothing is more soothing than sentiment. Many persons therefore prefer to take their religion in feeling rather than in practice. There are men to whose eyes you can bring tears by a few words, but from whose pocket you could not wring money by the eloquence of Demosthenes: and women who have a becoming enthusiasm for goodness in the drawing-room, but who would not sacrifice their pleasures to deliver a soul from death. If there be no correspondence between emotion and action, then religion is an inflated paper currency with no gold for its redemption, and the issue must be spiritual bankruptcy.

There is a nervous disease in which the blood

which ought to nourish the muscles has been withdrawn to the head, so that the muscles are depleted and the brain is congested. The patient can do no work, but he is eager, feverish, restless. The spiritual nature is subject to a similar disease; the energy which should expend itself in action is swallowed up in sentiment; there is an overflow of emotion, and a paralysis of action. Alone in our room with an inspiring book there is nothing which we do not achieve. We nurse lepers, rescue the fallen, die at the stake, make costly sacrifices, move multitudes, trample sin under foot, and annex the whole kingdom of virtues. We are St. Paul, David Livingstone, Florence Nightingale, and General Gordon all in one. We are in a third heaven of sublime devotion, then we lose our temper because some one recalls us to a household duty, or reminds us of an unanswered letter. We oscillate between imagination and selfishness, between passion and indolence. We are deceiving ourselves daily, counting what we would like to do, the same as what we do. Let us be more faithful with ourselves, and more suspicious of every emotion which has not been reduced to action. Idle excitement destroys the very tissue of the soul, and will leave us impotent for any good work, till at last

we walk in a vain show with a profession growing ever higher, and a practice sinking ever lower. The final judgment of life after all is not emotion but action.

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control
That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul
And change to purpose strong.

But he who lets his feelings run
In soft lascivious flow
Shrinks when hard service must be done
And faints at every blow.

Faith's meanest deed more favour bears
Where hearts and wills are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade.

V

VISION

"Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams."—*Acts of the Apostles* ii. 17.

ONE cannot quote this high word of Hebrew prophecy without the danger of prejudice. We are living in a day when the function of vision is depreciated and the faculty itself has almost ceased. The blood of the new century is thin and cold; its hopes are few and dim. The great poets and novelists are gone, or are silent; there is no writer left for whose new book we watch as for the breaking of the day, and whose reading would sustain us through the labour of life. No master is rising in painting or in music to interpret modern life and add new provinces to the kingdom of Art. Science, which last century had a career of such matchless success, is now gathering the fruit of her past discoveries. No wonder that thinking people are cynical, and literature is pessimistic, and that Mr. Pearson in his *National Life and Character* declares that there are no more conquests for the race. In this age of prosaic thought and pedestrian morality vision suggests everything that is unreal and ineffective—fanati-

cism, extravagance, sentimentality. Action is a synonym for everything that is practical and successful —industry, shrewdness, and capacity. We are afraid of a visionary because he is an incalculable element; he will take up with lost causes, propose unprofitable schemes, tamper with ancient institutions, and be indifferent to the motive of money. The practical man, with the multiplication table for his creed and the sphere of sight for his province, inspires you with confidence. Just in proportion as a man is cleansed from the visionary element is he serviceable for the mission of life; just in proportion as he sees visions is he unreliable. If young men began to see visions and old men to dream dreams it would be perilous both for Church and State. "Facts," we insist, "give us facts," and we secretly add, "Beware of fancies, for they too often mean vision."

Certainly let us always keep in touch with fact. But what about the chief fact of nature itself? Two worlds are ours, and each must be discerned by its own faculty. One is made up of places, people, circumstances, possessions—the physical; the other of ideas, feelings, affections, expectations—the spiritual. We are conscious of the house we live in, the faces that look at us, the task we do, the afflictions that befall us. We are conscious also of the sins that

are past, of the love we have tasted, of the aims we cherish, of the sorrow that wounded our hearts. Both worlds surround us, one of them tangible like water, the other intangible like air. We see one with our eyes, we fell the other with our soul.

> God keeps His holy mysteries
> Just on the outside of man's dream,
> In diapason slow we think,
> To hear their pinions rise and sink
> While they float pure beneath His eyes
> Like swans adown a stream.
>
> Things nameless, which in passing so,
> Do touch us with a subtle grace,
> We say who passes? They are dumb,
> We cannot see them go or come;
> Their touches fall, soft, cold as snow
> Upon a blind man's face.

In truth the physical represents the spiritual, and just as we have vision we detect the soul of things. To one man a poem is so much printed stuff, to another the interpretation of life. A picture is to one so much brilliant colouring, to another a window into eternity. An oratorio is to one so much harmonized sound, to another an epic of righteousness. A face is to one so many features, to another a biography. With sight you possess the outer world, with vision you enter into the inner world. Poets only illustrate this faculty, they do not monopolize it. No one is unconscious of the unseen, no one is insensible to its

influence. As the waves lap the soft sand, and leave their trace, so does the unseen impress our soul. Let the most prosaic man see the "rose of dawn," the expanse of ocean where the sunbeams bathe at noon, the mists wreathing round a mountain top, the corn falling before the sickle, the sun going down blood red behind the western hills, and there will be

> Stirrings of his soul which dart
> Through the barrier of flesh.

He will remember his boyhood, he will revisit his home, he will be filled with tender imaginations, he will make strenuous resolutions. When Wordsworth's "Country Girl" heard a thrush singing in London she was again in the North Countrie.

> A mountain ascending, a vision of trees,
> Bright volumes of vapour through Lothbury glide,
> And a river flows on, through the vale of Cheapside.

Vision as well as sight is a faculty of our nature.

Yes, and what about the facts of life—the action of which we make so much? If you wish to discover the source of a man's strength you must trace his life to some secret spring amid the everlasting hills. As the years come and go his life will re-inforce itself from many quarters, and cut its channel through many rocks, but every great life is a jet from the central waters, and on to the eternal sea will carry its first colour. Some felicitous phrase in a sermon

reveals the living Christ, as when an unknown monk drops the curtain from an Ascension. Some revelation is given to the agonized heart wrestling through the darkness unto the breaking of the day. Some sorrow fills the atmosphere with tears and brings the horizon nearer where earth and Heaven meet. No man tells what he has seen, nor is he able to explain what happened, but the vision will remain till the last of earth's shadows pass, and the man knows even as he is known.

Moses beheld in the desert a bush burning with fire and not consumed, and in that day entered upon his life work. Nothing would ever daunt that man's faith who for the briefest moment had caught the sheen of the Divine Presence. The rocks of the desert would yield water to God's people, and the skies drop manna; across the desert he would see the land flowing with milk and with honey and be content to die. For him henceforward the world was transfigured, and "every common bush" was "afire with God." King Uzziah's death chamber, that satire on human power, is suddenly changed into the heavenly temple, and Isaiah consecrates his life to the Holy One of Israel. St. Peter catches, as it were through a rent in the peasant garments of Jesus, the spiritual

splendour of His nature, and confesses the prophet of Nazareth to be the Son of God. St. Paul, torn between the grip of hereditary religion and the pleading of Jesus' spirit, receives the heavenly revelation and goes forth to conquer the world for Christ. St. John, flung like a dry seaweed on the coast of Patmos, beholds the open Heaven and Jesus at the right hand of God, and writes the epic of salvation. John Bunyan is cast into Bedford Gaol, and in that fortunate solitude dreams the *Pilgrim's Progress*. St. Francis goes out from the supper table, and beneath the sweet Umbrian sky woos his bride of poverty. No bush is common to him who has eyes to see; a cell becomes a universe to him whose soul is receptive. A lonely island is the annex of Heaven when a man has a pure heart. Sublime experiences which come and go swiftly, but do not leave a man the same. The sun sets, but the afterglow remains. The vision is henceforth a light upon the man's path, and a burning hope within his soul.

Without vision how could any man have endurance or patience? What is the testimony of sight? A ghastly struggle for existence, a masterful principle of evil, a perpetual human disability, a weary round of suffering, and then the silence of death,

with only here and there some achievement of faith, or some victory of righteousness to illuminate the darkness. What is the testimony of vision? An undying purpose of God, a regulated discipline of the soul, a constant environment of the spiritual and the long vista of everlasting life. Sight can only show us the shadow, but vision reveals the substance. Sight shows us the means, but vision the goal to which things are moving. Sight shows us what is, but vision assures us what ought to be, and what shall be.

There are four persons who need the life of vision, and the first is the man with the narrow life. Just as you look on the things which are seen or unseen your life will be commonplace or heroic, your labour drudgery or service, your mind a fountain of bitterness or sweetness, your outlook a dead wall or the eternal horizon. What a handful of bare facts are the incidents of your life—there are not enough to make a paragraph from the register of your birth to the register of your death. Cast this dry seed into the fostering soil of imagination, and what a harvest. Your birth—did not your soul come from God "with trailing clouds of glory?" Your home—is it not the prophecy of our Father's House? Your business—is it not your task in the

great household of Christ? Your marriage—is it not the sacrament of the divine love? Your death —will it not be the revelation of the spiritual world? This poor letterpress is changing into a poem. What a wealth of glory may be poured into obscure lives, as when a highland cottage is filled with the light of the setting sun, because the window is open to the west. William Blake lived with his wife in two rooms, and when the fashionable world beat upon his door he saw it come and go unmoved. "Leave me," he prayed, "my visions, and peace."

Vision is also the consolation of the man with the hard life. There are trials which cannot be belittled or talked away, as for instance an incurable disease, disappointing children, an empty home, a secret sorrow. This is a case where the unseen world must be brought in to redress the balance of the seen. There are two scales to the beam, one hanging on this side of the veil, full of tribulation, the other beyond the veil, weighed down with heavenly recompense. Consider the peaceable fruits of righteousness, the victory of tribulation, the fellowship of suffering, the company of Heaven. Matthew Arnold was greater as a poet than as a critic, and he was never finer than in one of his religious pieces.

'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,
And the pale weaver through his windows seen
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.

I met a preacher there I knew, and said:
"Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene?"
"Bravely!" said he, "for I of late have been
Much cheer'd with thoughts of Christ the Living Bread!"

Oh, human soul! as long as thou canst so
Set up a mark of everlasting light
Above the howling senses' ebb and flow,
To cheer thee and to right thee if thou roam
Not with lost toil thou labourest thro' the night,
Thou mak'st the Heaven, thou hop'st, indeed thy home.

Another who needs vision is the man with the busy life. If it be not always easy to realize God in solitude, it is hardest to believe in the spiritual when one is occupied every day with the material. It is not wonderful that men of affairs are apt to be worldly; it would be wonderful if they were unworldly, for the dyer's hands must take the colour of the dye he works in. Unless a merchant corrects his sight by vision, how can he preserve a spiritual atmosphere? His one hope is that of the diver, who as he goes down through the encompassing waters is supplied with air from above, so that while he gathers treasure in the depths he breathes another world. When some speculators went to Faraday and showed how he could enrich himself by his discoveries, the father of modern

science answered, "I am too busy to make money." He was impervious to worldly ambition, because he was consecrated to science. You may trust a man with any earthly riches who has his treasure in Heaven; you may place on his head any crown who has seen Christ's crown of thorns; you may applaud him to the echo who is watching the lips of Christ. Vision has many a victory for the martyrs, but one of its chief victories belongs to the man who, immersed in the affairs of this world, is a citizen of the world to come, who has

Sought the soul's world—spurned the worms.

And, last of all, vision is the only reinforcement of the Christian soldier. The true man does not grudge his sacrifice of time or toil if he can see its fruit, but what he sees is often waste and defeat. He envies the builder whose wall rises before him foot by foot, the ploughman who adds furrow to furrow across the stubble, the fisher who comes home at daybreak with his boat full. If he were only sure that his work was not in vain, if he could only see the Kingdom of God coming. This he cannot always see, and therefore he must believe. He must cleanse the vision of his soul, and look forward. He must turn his eyes from earth unto the city which is coming down from Heaven like a

bride adorned for her husband. And for the success of that day he must live, and fight, and die. His visions will one day be sight; his dreams will one day be fact.

Happy he whose inward ear
Angel comfortings can hear
O'er the rabble's laughter;
And, while hatred's faggots burn,
Glimpses through the smoke discern
Of the good hereafter.

Knowing this, that never yet
Share of Truth was vainly set,
In the world's wide fallow;
After hands shall sow the seed,
After hands from hill and mead,
Reap the harvests yellow.

Thus, with somewhat of the Seer,
Must the moral pioneer
From the Future borrow;
Clothe the waste with dreams of grain
And, on midnight's sky of rain,
Paint the golden morrow!

VI

CONVERSION

"Repent ye therefore and be converted."—*Acts* iii. 19.

FOSTER used to say "We must put a new face upon things," and there are times when one would like to gather the whole mass of religious terminology and bury it in the depths of the sea, because one is afraid that the beauty of many spiritual ideas is concealed by their shabby garments. The words in which we clothe them are like Scottish bank notes, which were perfectly clean when they were first issued, but have been soiled as they passed through many greasy hands. When the religious term was created it expressed a genuine experience of the soul in a becoming fashion. After it had been repeated by men who did not feel its power, it degenerated into cant, and we should wish to see it withdrawn.

Yet that unpleasant bank note has the same value as at the beginning of its career, and a

religious experience is eternal. No word has been more despised in worldly society or more laughed at in certain circles of literature than conversion. But conversion states one of the most profound realities of the spiritual life, and affords one of the most convincing evidences of an unseen world. "Blame not the word conversion," says Carlyle; "rejoice rather that such a word signifying such a thing has come to light in our modern era, though hidden from the wisest ancient. . . . What to Plato was an hallucination and to Socrates a chimera is now clear and certain to your Zinzendorfs, your Wesleys and the poorest of their pietists and methodists."

The idea of conversion is not the monopoly of one religious school nor of any single religion. The revival preacher of the Protestant Church corresponds to the preaching friar of the Roman Church, and the ascetic of Christianity is represented by the fakir of the East. The Incarnation is at the base of Buddhism, and the doctrine of the Trinity is embodied in the ancient Egyptian religion. There has been no religion without conversion,and where philosophy replaced religion

you have conversion. When one of the philosophical revivalists, as Dr. Dill tells us in his *Roman Society*, was holding a meeting, an Athenian of the better class came in, careless and intoxicated. As he listened to Zenocrates he was deeply impressed, and tearing off his garland of roses he began a new life and lived to become himself the head of that academy of philosophy. Plutarch used to go out upon a mission, and after he had preached he would invite men to remain behind and open to him their spiritual troubles. Conversion is a human incident, and its records are among the most real of human documents.

Conversion is to be carefully distinguished from regeneration. Regeneration is the absolute act of the divine spirit; the human soul is altogether passive; regeneration can only take place once. It is the great mystery of life and the supreme act of the Eternal. God gives us spring in the physical world, in the spiritual world He renews the soul. No man can regenerate his neighbour, and no man knows when he was regenerated himself. "The spirit bloweth where it listeth."

Conversion is within the sphere of human

experience, and in it the will of man co-operates with the will of God. The word means to turn round and to go in the opposite direction. When the human soul leaves God it goes from home; when the human soul returns to God it returns home, and this turning round and this going back is conversion. Regeneration is the spiritual counterpart of conversion, and as regeneration is a supreme act of God, conversion is the supreme experience of the human soul.

Professor James in his *Varieties of Religious Experiences*, the most scientific book on the phenomena of the religious consciousness which has ever been published, refers to two classes whom he calls the "Once Born" and the "Twice Born." He is really thinking of conversion, not of regeneration, and he suggests that while every one needs to be regenerated there are people who do not need to be converted. "God," he says, "has two families of children on this earth, the 'once born' and the 'twice born.'" Of the latter he writes—"God is to them the impersonation of kindness and beauty; of human sin they know perhaps little in their own past and not very much in the world, and human suffering

does but melt them to tenderness." Are we not accustomed too readily to assume that every human being has spent his first years in wandering from God, and that there must come a time for him to retrace his steps. But is this so? When we offer our children to God in prayer at birth, does the prayer count for nothing? When we present our children at the font in baptism does the act mean nothing? Why should we take for granted that the child has not then been set with its face towards Heaven? Why should we not take heart of grace and believe that the child has been converted? Have we never known people who have always had the light of God's face upon their life, and who all day long have chanted their morning song? Have we never had friends among the once born, and whose whole life has been a unity? I do not mean they did not sin; converted people sin. Or that they were perfect; converted people are not perfect. But their faces were in the right direction from the beginning. One of the most charming and oldest ministers of Jesus Christ in America, Dr. Everett Hale, of Boston, says—"I always knew God loved me and I was always grateful to Him

for the world He placed me in. A child who is early taught that he is God's child, that he may live and move and make his being in God, will take life more kindly, and will probably make more of it, than one who is told he is born a child of wrath." People are troubled because they cannot remember the day of their conversion. Does it matter very much that one does not know when the sun rose in his room if he was in the light when he waked? Some hand opened the shutters early when he was unconscious. Behind him was a race of godly ancestors; one gave him the colour of his eyes: another the way he walked: a third his pleasant temper: a fourth his trick of imagination; why should not they also have given him his faith? Let him be thankful that he belongs to the happy class who have no bitter regrets, no broken lives, no ugly memories.

There are other people who will require to be converted several times before they come to the Heavenly Kingdom. St. Peter was once a fisherman and learned to use rough language. He met Jesus and became a changed man—that was his first conversion. Then came that awful tragedy when he denied his Lord with an oath just as he

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used to swear at a fellow fisherman on the Lake of Galilee. He had turned round the wrong way, he was diverted. His Lord prophesied that he would repent, and in anticipation of that day Jesus said to him—"When thou art converted strengthen the brethren." He went out and wept bitterly—that was his second conversion. When St. Paul rebuked him afterwards for his temporizing conduct, and called upon him to be more straightforward, that may have been a third conversion. One feels that the apostle John had never been converted because he had always been in fellowship with God; one feels that the apostle Peter would be converted several times before he came to perfection.

There are other Americans beside Dr. Hale, and I knew a Western who was not particularly well read nor particularly cultured in manner. He was a man who had lived through hard times and had done rough deeds. One day he introduced me to a woman with much respect. "She is," he said, "the widow of the minister who converted me the first time. I have been converted six times, but the first was the hardest." His was the experience of the apostle Peter. He had

been turned round more than once, and I had an impression the last time I saw him that he had passed through his crowning conversion. If any one is conscious of conversion, once or more, he never can doubt the grace of God, or the immortality of his soul, or the world to which he belongs. Within his own life he has the evidence of the direct interference of God.

It is impossible to standardize conversion, because you cannot reduce human nature to a uniformity. As long as every man has his own history, ancestry, and idiosyncrasy, there will be many kinds of conversion. There is only one God to return to and one Father's House, but these are innumerable far countries, and John Bunyan is not the only man who has been converted. Perhaps the most conventional conversion is *moral*, when a man is turned from sin to holiness. Some people are kept from God not by worldliness or unbelief, but by the power of fleshly sins. From their childhood they have been held in the bondage of the senses, and they have been the slaves of their passions. They may not have sinned in act, but they have sinned in their imagination. It does not follow that their nature

is coarser, it may be richer; their blood may not be fouler, it may be redder. A spring of water if it be banked will water a glen, if it run at large will make a morass. Their conversion will not be the destruction but the redemption of their passion. St. Mary Magdalene went astray from the wealth of her love, and when her soul came back to its home she washed Christ's feet with her tears. Her passion was glorified, and according to an old tradition, when the body of Christ was taken down from the cross, St. Mary Magdalene had His feet again, and this time she washed away, not the dust of the road, but the blood wherewith He had redeemed her. St. Augustine had a nature fired with the African sun, and he fought hard with the awful tyranny of his lusts. "How long," he cried, "O Lord how long." With a single blow in the garden scene Christ broke the chain of sin, and later St. Augustine wrote—"Thou didst cast out my sins by coming in Thyself, thou greater sweetness."

Another form of conversion is *spiritual*, and it is the experience, not of a publican and sinner, but of a Scribe and Pharisee. He has not gone astray as the sinners do; he has lived with God

all his days ; he is not the younger but the elder brother. But there are two ways of living with God. This man has not been docile, he has been servile ; he has not been filial, he has been menial. His idea of God is a hard task-master, and his spirit has been that of a hireling. It is an unspeakable change when a Pharisee discovers that God is not hard or uncharitable, but that He is gracious and magnanimous. When St. Paul found that he was not expected to live in the gloom of Mount Sinai, but in the light of Calvary, and that God was not a lawgiver but a father, he was converted from legality into grace. One day our Scots saint, Erskine of Linlathen, met a Highland shepherd on the moor and said to him, " Donald, do you know the Father ? " The Highlander only knew the " creator," " lawgiver " and " judge : " so Mr. Erskine preached his Gospel of the Fatherhood to him. Next year he was on the moor again and the shepherd came to him and said, " I know the Father." Dr. Chalmers, our chief Scots Kirkman of recent times, had the same experience and the same kindly transformation. He was always an exemplary parish clergyman, but for many years he had no sense

of the spirituality of religion. There came a great change over him, and from that day he was a power in Scotland, and he tasted the fullness of life. On the last night of his life as he walked in his garden he was overheard saying, "Oh my dear Heavenly Father." He lay down to sleep, and in the morning they found he was with the Father.

A third form of conversion is *intellectual.* Nathaniel was not able to believe that Jesus was the Messiah on account of scripture difficulties, and St. Thomas could not believe that Jesus was the Son of God on account of rational difficulties. The solution of both problems, and of every other religious problem, is found in Jesus Christ Himself. When a man perplexed on every side places himself in Christ's hand to see whether Christ will lead him, and what Christ will do with him, that is conversion. Mr. Romanes in *A Candid Examination of Theism* wrote—"There can no longer be any doubt that the existence of a God is wholly unnecessary to explain any of the phenomena of the universe." Afterwards he wrote *A Candid Examination of Religion*, and he quotes as expressing his own feelings:

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one,
Yet the light of a whole life dies,
When love is done.

And he adds—"How great then is Christianity as being the religion of love, and causing men to believe both in the cause of love's supremacy and the infinity of God's love to man." Two candid examinations, and between them a conversion.

There is one other form of conversion which is *practical*. One may be neither a sinner, nor a Pharisee, nor a doubter, and yet come short because he is doing nothing with his life. He is easygoing, luxurious, pleasant, useless. Conversion for him will be the call to service, perhaps in a Sunday school, or in a workman's club, perhaps to work among the sick, or to enter a town council. A young Italian was feasting with his friends, centuries ago. He wearied of the wine and of the jests; he went out and stood beneath the clear blue Umbrian sky. When his friends joined him they said—"You are in love;" and he had the distant look of a man whose thoughts were in another world. "I am," said St. Francis, "in love, and my bride is called

poverty." No one has been anxious to woo her since Jesus lived, and he was going to serve her all his days. We know how loyal he was to his love, and it was a distinguished Frenchman, and not a believer, who said that there never had been a Christian like St. Francis since the days of Christ Himself. And that is the last and most beautiful kind of conversion—conversion to the service of our fellow men under the constraint of Jesu's love.

VII

THE PASSION OF GOD

"In all their affliction he was afflicted."—Isaiah lxiii. 9.

THE idea of God when not guided by the spirit of Christ is apt to oscillate between a ferocious deity who is simply an incarnation of the remorseless laws of nature—a sublimated chief magistrate, and an imbecile deity who is too good-natured to punish sin at all—an exceedingly foolish father. The former God cannot be loved, although He may be obeyed, as one obeys the law of gravitation, and the latter cannot be respected although He may be liked, as one likes an inoffensive person. Were we compelled to choose between the two we had better take the magistrate, for this world would not be worth living in to-day, and the world to come would have no attraction, if the reins of government were in the hands of a deity who made no distinction between righteousness and unrighteousness, the being whom the French with friendly

and contemptuous pity call "the good God." With Christian thought we rise to a higher level, and the spiritual genius of the Bible is shown, not in the reconciliation of mercy and of justice, which is a clumsy device of second-rate theology, but their inclusion in love. Love taking vengeance on sin which has wronged the human soul is justice; love redeeming the soul is mercy. The conflict of emotion in the nature of God which the prophets do not hesitate to describe, as for instance—"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim, how shall I deliver thee Israel? My heart is turned within me. My repentings are kindled together," is not a contradiction. It is rather the play of parts in music which leads us to final unity; the mixture of contending colours in tapestry which blend into one pattern.

Hebrew piety has taught us two truths regarding God which are not always united in human thought, but which are necessary to the perfect idea, and the first is not His sympathy but His spirituality. With travail of soul the saints of the Old Testament extricated the Being of God from the phenomena of nature and safeguarded His personality from the abstractions

of philosophy. God who made the clouds His chariot and rode upon the wings of the wind was the creator of the ends of the earth, and He who was the source of righteousness and power dwelt with the contrite and humble heart. Monotheism stands midway between the extremes of Atheism—the denial that there is any God, and Pantheism—the affirmation that everything is God. Monotheism means one God over all, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and it is the basis of all sound thinking. As often as the spirituality of God is obscured, either when He is imagined as a blind force, or as an impersonation of sentiment, the religious consciousness must fall back on Jewish thought both for health and for strength.

Surely it was enough for one school of religious thinkers to bequeath this heritage to the world! But it was an even greater achievement when the prophets of Israel infused that pure spirituality with a most intimate sympathy and convinced many generations that the Holy One of Israel is the most gracious Deity who has ever entered into the heart of man. When the prophets had grasped the transcendence of God and imagined

Him raised above this world, which had been created by the word of His power, and reigning over mankind which is the instrument of His will, they might well have been so occupied with His majesty as to be unable to compass His pity. Yet there is no emotion of the human heart they did not assign to God, no tender relation of life they did not use to illustrate His love. He is a husband whose affection has been wasted upon a heartless woman, and whose honour has been stained by her unfaithfulness, but who still follows her with entreaties to return, because he cannot bear the thought that she, who was once his wife, should perish in shame. He is a father who used to hold his little son by the arms and tempt him to walk, and now when the lad has grown to be a man, and played the fool exceedingly, still remembers how Ephraim looked in his youth and what he was to his father long ago. He is a herdsman who has treated his flock with the most tender care, and yet they have dealt with Him more stupidly than the unreasonable animals with their master; "for the ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know, my people doth not

consider." From every page of Isaiah and Hosea the Holy One of Israel stretches out His hand to a rebellious and gainsaying people. Everywhere the words burn to your touch, and you feel throughout the Bible the throb of the divine heart.

As time went on the prophets began to hope that God Who had sent so many messages to suffering men, and had given them such help in their misery, would not be able to contain Himself in the security of His heaven, but that He would come after a visible fashion into the midst of this human Gehenna. Is not the Incarnation of Christ the convincing climax of the divine sympathy? Jesus born of the Virgin Mary and crucified upon the Cross of Calvary is God with us, baptized into the very depths of human suffering. When Jesus came and lived among us the heart of God was laid bare, and every one can see in the Gospel that patient wistful love which inhabits the secret place of the universe. As the father sits upon the housetop, and watches the crest of the hill, that he may catch the first glimpse of the returning prodigal; as the householder makes ready his feast and sends for his

ungrateful guests; as the vine master appeals to his disloyal tenants by his own son, we learn the expectation of God. As Jesus takes into His arms little children whom superior people have despised, and casts His charity over penitent women whom Pharisees cannot forgive, and mourns at the tomb of Lazarus over a friend whom He cannot afford to lose, one learns the graciousness of God. As Jesus turns sadly from Nazareth, the city of His youth, which had refused Him, and reproaches Capernaum, the city of His choice, which did not believe in Him, and weeps openly over Jerusalem which knew not the day of her visitation, one learns the regret of God. And as Jesus appeals to the disciples, "Will ye also go away?" and prophesies with a sad heart that every one of His friends will forsake Him, and is cast into a deep gloom by the betrayal of Judas, we learn what is almost incredible, but most comfortable, the dependence of God. The cross is not only in the heart of human life, it is also in the heart of God. He is the chief of all sufferers, because He is the chief of all lovers.

One does not forget, while insisting on the fellow suffering of God, that there is a certain

danger in analogies between the human and divine, and one lays to heart the warnings against Anthropomorphism. But we must not allow ourselves to be beaten by big words, and we can surely distinguish between what is real and unreal. Has it not been the religious expert—the saints, the mystics, and the prophets, who have most loved to dwell upon this likeness between God and man? Has it not been the non-religious expert, the philosophers, the scientists, the men of letters, who have been most inclined to ridicule this argument from the seen to the unseen, and this representation of the divine nature in terms of human experience. If ever the Spirit of God inhabited the human breast, He inspired the Hebrew prophets and Jesus confirmed their character of God in His Evangel. It sounds wise to say that we ought not to think of God as "a magnified non-natural man," but when you drive this argument to its conclusion it comes to this, that we must give up thinking about God altogether. It is a plea, not against Anthropomorphism but for Agnosticism. What other life can we reason from except the highest we know? What other language can we use than

that which clothes the ideas of this life? When we stand on the height of our conscience, and declare with confidence that truth is right and a lie is wrong, are we not entitled to believe that what is righteous with us is righteous with God, and that what is unrighteous on earth is unrighteous in Heaven. Was not John Stuart Mill right in essence when he said that if God sent him to Hell for refusing to declare that wrong was right, to Hell he would go? When we make a sacrifice for those whom we love and stand upon the height of our heart, may we not be sure that our love is the outcome of the passion of God, and that if we deal kindly by our flesh and blood He will be ten thousand times more kind to us all? As Sir Oliver Lodge said in the *Hibbert Journal*—"Let not any worthy human attribute be denied to the Deity. There are many errors but there is one truth in Anthropomorphism whatever worthy attribute belongs to man . . . . its existence in the universe is thereby admitted. . . . We must blink nothing—evolution is a truth, a strange and puzzling truth; 'the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together,' and the most perfect of all the

sons of men, the likest God this planet ever saw—He to whom many look for their idea of what God is, surely He taught us that suffering, and sacrifice, and wistful yearning for something not yet attainable were not to be regarded as human attributes alone."

As Newton could have prophesied from the properties of a drop of water the possibility of an Atlantic, so from human nature at its best we can imagine God. Our analogies may be but shadows, but they are the shadows of reality. God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts, but this is not because they are worse, but because they are better. It is not foolishness to compare God to an earthly father, only we must remember that the heavenly transcends the earthly wisdom to an infinite degree. "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children," said Christ, "how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him." It is not foolishness to compare God to a mother provided we remember that as Heaven is higher than the earth, so the tenderness of God transcends even a mother's faithfulness, and for once a mother is

disparaged beside the compassion of God. "Can a mother forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she may forget, yet will not I forget thee."

With this glimpse into the heart of God we gather riches for our creed because we learn the idea of a loveable God. It is possible to think correctly about God, but not kindly. Perhaps the most masterly definition of God in all theology is in the Catechism of the Scots Kirk: "God is a spirit infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." According to a pleasant story, the divines of the Westminster Assembly were so overcome by the majesty of the subject that they besought God by one of their number to illuminate their minds, and the Scots minister who offered prayer used those words. They were accepted as an immediate answer, and by the standard of theology there could not be a more comprehensive description of God. And yet this noble utterance has one defect; it satisfies the intellect, it does not touch the heart. It is theology—a study in pure being; it is not religion—for it barely suggests a person. With

all its careful selection of attributes it does not, from beginning to end, mention love—the word of all others one would have expected, and which embraces all attributes. If one is exercising his intellect he can have no better guide than this definition, if his heart be tired he will find it a marble pillow. Why did not those learned divines inquire of that apostle who once laid his head on Jesu's bosom, and felt the heart of God beat? Suppose they had taken the words of St. John and written "God is love." Why did they not sit at Jesu's feet who had lain in God's bosom and revealed the Father. Suppose they had heard Jesus and had written "Our Father in Heaven." Would it not have made a difference both in many hearts and many homes if generation after generation of children had been asked "What is God?" and learned to answer for their life long "My Heavenly Father." No doubt the God of the Catechism and of the Gospels is one, as the mountain is one from its base to its summit. But the lofty peak is only for the trained climber, and even he may lose his head on the perilous ascent. It is wiser for ordinary people to find their resting-

place in the clefts of the rocks where the flowers are blooming in the eye of the sun. Master thinkers miss their footing when they speculate on the Being of God, but the simplest can hide himself in God's protecting love, who is perfect father and mother, perfect husband and friend.

With this glimpse into the divine heart we also gather riches for the struggle of life, because we have a sympathetic God. It is hard enough in any case to pray unto one whom we cannot see, and it is beyond our power if we imagine Him untouched by this world's agony, which breaks beneath His feet as spray upon the base of a cliff. How can a transcendent God understand us any more than we can enter into the feelings of an insect on which we placed our foot this morning? But an immanent God, united to us by the Incarnation, and dwelling in us by the Spirit, who is affronted by every sin, wounded by every ill-usage, and disappointed by every rebuff, draws out our heart. He must feel because He has suffered. Behold! He also stretched out His hand and no man regarded; He has been betrayed and put to shame in His own house. He carries upon Him the burden of the

world's care and sorrow; He has had prodigal children, and been broken-hearted by His own friends; He also has been misunderstood, persecuted, insulted. What trial of man has not also been the lot of God? What sorrow has not been tasted by God? What sin has not been committed against Him? Before we pray He has heard us, not only because His ear is open to our cry but because "In all our affliction He has been afflicted, and so the Angel of His presence saves us."

Think not thou canst sigh a sigh,
And thy Maker is not by;
Thinkest thou canst weep a tear
And thy Maker is not near.

O He gives to us His joy
That our grief He may destroy,
Till our grief is fled and gone
He doth sit by us and moan.

Outside holy scripture there has not been a more intimate apprehension of the fellow suffering of God than these words of Blake.

He doth sit by us and moan.

VIII

JESUS' APPRECIATION OF MORALITY

"Then Jesus beholding him loved him."—*St. Mark's Gospel* x. 21.

WHEN it is recorded in this vivid gospel, as by one who had seen the affection in the Master's eye, that Jesus loved the young ruler, we ought to allow their full meaning to the words. Jesus was not one to mistake a pleasant manner for a true heart, or to bestow the approval of emotion where His judgment condemned. He searched men as with fire, and called each man by his own name. If Jesus looked with favour upon any one and made overtures of friendship to him, then be sure that man deserved well of the eternal law and of all good people. This ruler did not make the highest claim, nor did he trade upon false pretences. He did not profess religion—the passion which fills the soul with love unto the Deity, and moves one to sacrifice everything for an unseen cause.

What he professed was modest and becoming, that he had been an obedient son, that he had lived cleanly, that he had not told lies, that he had done his duty by his neighbour, that in short he had carried himself as a kindly and honourable gentleman. This he was, and because he was this Jesus loved him. And the attitude of Jesus to this kind of man suggests various useful ideas, and is also charged with encouragement.

Upon the face of it Jesus did not regard a person who is moral, but not religious, as utterly depraved. The depravity of such people is laid down in certain Church standards, and is still, one gathers, believed by many. "We are," says an ancient document which was deliberately written in England and hastily adopted in Scotland, "indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." It is also asserted in the same Confession that the works of an unregenerate man are "sinful and cannot please God." Those deliverances are supported by quotations from various parts of holy scripture, not, however, so much from the Gospels as from the Pentateuch. People have been browbeaten by those statements into words

of self-condemnation against which they have no corresponding experience, and which they would justly resent on the lips of their best friends. They also have taken from such teaching a pessimistic view of human nature, so that there is a striking difference between the theory of what their neighbours are and the working treatment of the same neighbours. If a person seriously believed such words then he would hold that those whom he loves, and with whom he lives, as well as those whom he knows abroad and with whom he deals, are by nature, to use the words of one of our most beautiful hymns,

False and full of sin

Really he treats them as absolutely straightforward, and relies upon their integrity. Under the influence of this morbid theology one would regard his child as a son of the devil, but with the evidence of experience he treats him as a son of God. Which creates an artificial atmosphere, and prevents us getting into touch with reality.

This doctrine of humanity is first of all wrong in theory, for it does not explain the situation.

If a person be by nature absolutely corrupt, then there is no possibility of salvation for him. Salvation is not the creation of another being, it is the restoration of the present being. If the house be so infected that there be not in it one sound stone, then it must be pulled down to the foundation and its very material scattered. Nothing will remain but an empty site, and upon it another house may be built. If I am bad through and through, then my reason, my heart, my will are all unreliable. They must go, and what remains? If a man has a weak spot in one of his lungs he may be cured, if both lungs are thoroughly rotten he must die; for there is no sound spot from which recovery may begin. Granted health somewhere, then nature can work from that centre and drive the disease out in an ever expanding circle. And Jesus believed that in every man there was a core of goodness, and to it He appealed..

This doctrine is also wrong because it is not confirmed by facts. What shall we say of the patriot who is not a saint but who dies for his country? Is not patriotism in itself, even when not crowned with religion, a good thing? What

of the artisan who refuses to turn out scamped work, and yet who may not always live as we should wish him ? Is not his honesty of purpose a good thing ? What of the merchant who is a sceptic but who has never failed to meet his obligations ? Is not integrity a good thing ? What of the mother who passionately loves her child, but has never been converted ? Is not love a good thing ? Are we not bound to hold when we face life that patriotism and honesty and integrity and love are absolutely good, and have nothing whatever to do with depravity, and that so far the people who produce them are good also. To say that people who are not pious are depraved is an absurdity, for we know that many persons who are not religious practise higher morals, in business especially, than some who are. When Jesus considered this young man's life the Master loved him, and He did not love what was not good.

Jesus' appreciation of the young ruler also reminds us that the more morality there is in the community, the better both for Church and State. One is moved to enter a humble protest against that indirect depreciation of morality

which consists in bidding men beware of good works, and warning them that it is not by such works they will be saved. As if the average man, or even the average Christian, were staggering under the weight of his superfluous morality. As if any one were likely to be saved who had no good works. It is no use commanding men to lay their "deadly doing down," for there is no man doing too much in the way of goodness. It were better to warn men that the grace of God is wholly ineffectual and has failed with every man whom it has not made straight and charitable. It is a wholesome change in ethics from the modern hymns to the Old Testament Psalms; it is rising from the warm enervating plain of Italy to the cold bracing highlands of the Engadine. Not only have the Psalms an incomparable majesty which no hymn except the *Te Deum* rivals, and an unaffected tenderness which no hymn, except perhaps "Rock of Ages," has ever touched, but the Psalms have also an ethical tone which is wanting in many popular hymns. If the soldier of Christ wishes to brace himself for strenuous living, and the discharge of daily duty, he can hardly find a hymn to make the

blood move in his veins. He turns with satisfaction to Psalm i., where the doctrine and the practice correspond. The man who walketh in the law of the Lord, that man shall stand; the man who does not walk in the law of the Lord, believe what he may or say what he please, will be scattered like chaff before the wind of Heaven.

And Jesus' treatment of this excellent young man suggests that one object of Jesus' mission is to raise morality into spirituality. As one has pointed out there are four stages in the development of our nature—animality, intellectuality, morality, spirituality. Most people will allow that morality stands above the first two, but many forget that there is something higher. Moses brought men to the level of morality, Jesus led them to the level where morality passes into religion. It was not His business to enforce the Ten Commandments, it was His to replace them by the principle of love. Jesus does not treat the moral man as an outcast, but claims him as His disciple. He does not reproach him, He approves him and desires to reward him. Can a man stand before the grave of his father

and mother, no doubt with many regrets, but yet without shame? Jesus, the Son of Mary, hastens to his side. He is a good son and for him there remains a recompense, both in this world and that which is to come. Has he done his work to the utmost of his ability? Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, gives him His hand. When the fire comes and burns up the pretensions of hypocrites his sound doing will stand. Has he been a loyal husband, and a faithful father? Jesus who glorified the family gives him His benediction, and nothing can make it void. This is a moral man, and he is ranking very high. But something still is wanting, and Jesus would fain supply it. The Master desires to take that love which gathers round wife and child and raise it till it consciously touches God. He wants to take that work which has been so true and thorough, and change it into the direct service of God. He wants to add our Father's House to the earthly home, and open the vistas of immortality. Jesus has not come to take anything away; He has come to raise everything to the highest level so that the man may stand, not only on the height of his intellect and of his

conscience, but of his soul, where he can see the Land of Promise. Morality is like the clean and well chiselled marble of the ancient story, beautiful, but cold. When the Spirit of Jesus touches it the stone reddens and lives. Religion is morality touched with emotion, till, instead of duty we speak of love, and to the treasure of a good conscience and an honourable life are added the peace which passeth all understanding, the joy unspeakable and full of glory and that vision of God which in itself is life everlasting.

It was not in vain that the young ruler kept the Commandments; it was because he kept them that Jesus loved him. It is not in vain that any man has lived bravely outside religion, it is because he has done so well that Jesus desires to have him for a disciple. No faithfulness of service in any province of life, and no ministry of charity, have passed unnoticed by Him who alone understands human nature, and who is our Judge. Our Lord has a welcome for all men who will come to Him, even the thief upon the cross; but of only one seeker in the Gospels is it written that Jesus loved him. He was not a reprobate, nor was he a Pharisee, he was a well

living and high minded man. If he had been able to make the last sacrifice then one dares to think the young ruler would have become a chief apostle, and the rival of St. Paul. When, therefore, one like the young ruler approaches Jesus, the Master sees a man after His own heart. When such a one refuses the cross which alone can raise him to his full manhood the Master is bitterly disappointed. And that man suffers the chief loss of life.

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IX

CONTEMPT OF GOODNESS

"Herod set Jesus at nought."—*St. Luke* xxiii. 11.

WHEN the tide of circumstances flung Herod and Jesus together for a brief hour, one has an illustration of the inexhaustible irony of history. The world has not afforded another contrast so vivid and arresting. It was a sudden collision of extreme moral opposites which first arrests the imagination and then searches the soul. We are always interested when the East meets the West, wondering what the aliens will think of one another, what they will say, what they will do, and what will be the result of the incongruous meeting. And by an irresponsible action of Pontius Pilate, anxious on any terms to get rid of Jesus, the Master was brought to Herod's palace, and stood before him a helpless prisoner.

Christ and Herod could not be called entire strangers. They had been living in the same

province as public men for more than two years, —one as a prophet of God, the other as his king. For it is worth remembering, if only for the grim humour of human affairs that Herod Antipas was our Lord's titular monarch. Each had been moving in his own orbit, and fulfilling the bias of his own nature. Jesus had been sojourning in the villages of Galilee and working among the poor folk He loved. Herod had been feasting in his gorgeous palace on the Lake of Galilee, or in the castle where he held John Baptist prisoner. As people may live in the same district and have nothing to do with one another, so Herod and Jesus were contemporaries in Galilee, and so far as we know never met, because one was in the higher circle of society, and the other was in the lower. Of course they had heard of each other in their different spheres, and they had spoken of each other in the hearing of the people. Herod listened with troubled ear to weird reports of Jesus' words and declared with a thrill of superstition that He must be the ghost of John Baptist. Jesus on His part was warned to beware of Herod, and for once in His life spoke of a man not with hot

anger, but with utter contempt. "Tell that fox," He said, and "fox" sounds strangely on Jesus' lips. The Master had been often indignant both with friends and with foes, but this was worse that heat. Better far that Christ should turn upon one as He did on Simon Peter, and say, "Get thee behind Me, Satan," than to call him a fox. The prince thinks of the prophet as the revengeful spirit of his victim, raised to trouble him. The prophet dismisses the prince from His thoughts, with this scornful by word as moral vermin. Between these two there is a spiritual repulsion which could never be overcome, and now Christ stands bound before Herod and his petty court. The Master is at the mercy of the fox. It is an absolute reversal of everything that is fitting. Christ as subject and prisoner, Herod Antipas as Tetrarch and Judge.

Consider for an instant the two figures which are beneath one roof, and in such a mad relation to one another. This princeling who set Jesus at nought was as miserable a creature as could be found if you had searched the world over. He belonged to the evil Idumean house, and

was the son of that Herod who slew the children of Bethlehem ; he was the cesspool of his race, and into him had poured all their iniquity with little of their capacity. Antipas was a libertine, a tyrant, a coward, and a sycophant. There was not in him a hint of goodness, save his early slavish respect for John Baptist, which was not however so strong as his vices. There was no place in his heart where a noble thought could lodge ; there was no conscience left to which a successful appeal could be made. That was Herod—and what of Christ ? We all know ; there is no need for description, nor opportunity for controversy. Sometimes a critic, bereft of spiritual sanity, or intoxicated with the cant of unbelief, will pretend to detect flaws in the character of Christ. But he is left unanswered, with the people who argue that the world is flat, or that Bacon wrote *Shakespeare*; or that Jeffries was a just judge, or that the Borgias have been much misunderstood. The world may have difficulties about Christianity, but it has made up its mind about Christ. Whether He be God or not, He is at least the bright and perfect excellency of humanity. No, history has never

done anything so ironical as when it set Herod to judge Christ.

Could you imagine Herod, being what he was, doing anything else than mock Jesus? Had Jesus still possessed the suffrages of the fickle mob, and the air been still sounding with Hosannah instead of Crucify, Herod had never set Jesus at nought. Had Jesus been a high priest, holding aristocratic office, and representing a powerful tradition; had He been a Roman officer with the power of Caesar behind him; had Jesus been the rich man of Christ's parable, building larger barns every year; had He even been a famous Scribe with authority among the mob of Jerusalem; had He been Caiaphas, or Pontius Pilate, or Joseph of Arimathea, Herod had given Him respect, at least from the teeth. Had Jesus even complied with his insolent desire, and performed miracles to amuse him and his courtiers, Herod had either crouched in terror at the signs of power, or been vastly amused as by the tricks of a conjuror. But Jesus friendless, powerless, silent, how could the Tetrarch appreciate Him? You must go by what you know, and what you respect, and Herod

appraised Jesus by the only standard of his command, the standard of the world. What has he got? Votes? Ah! me, none now. They have all turned, save a faithful few, to the other side. Rank? He was a carpenter, and now He is a prophet. Riches? Not enough to buy a grave. Do you say goodness? Yes, He has goodness, like that of God Himself. Is that all? Do you expect Antipas to take goodness seriously? There are men to whom the most radiant goodness, uninvested with substantial glory, is a fourth dimension—something which you may argue exists, but which they can never realize. The idea that a man without a farthing, without a friend, who has no position in society, who has failed in his enterprise, may yet be great through character, was quite beyond the range of Herod's vision. No! Jesus was simply a man who had made some noise, and tried His hand at being a prophet, and missed His chance, and had come to grief. He was a negligible quantity who could be treated as anybody pleased. There had been a faint anxiety in Herod's mind lest Jesus should have some magical power, and become troublesome. It

was clear now that He had none, for if He had, of course He would have used it to please Herod, and secure His own safety. Herod had beheaded John Baptist with some misgivings; He had been uneasy about Jesus, but his mind was now relieved. If Jesus ever had been a force He was a spent force—He could not strike back. And Herod could insult Him with safety. Jesus had called Herod "fox"; well, time brings its revenge, and Jesus was now in the fox's power. We can create the scene, the jibes of Herod, the laughter of his satellites, the poor humour of the gorgeous robe. It was not kingly, it was not manly, but it was natural—it was Herod. When the court had been satiated with amusement they sent Jesus back to Pilate.

This kind of scene is very exasperating, and one does not willingly look upon it. But may it not be a picture, magnified to heroic size, and flung upon the screen of sacred history, of what has always been going on, and is going on still? Does the suspicion never cross one's mind that he may be doing in a more decent way what this princeling did after his fashion long ago? Is our vision so keen that we have never

missed the beautiful when it was before our eyes? Is our judgment so perfect that it has never gone astray? Have we made no mistakes in the depreciation of goodness, and the admiration of badness? One can neither study history nor contemporary life without discovering that the average man has never been tardier than in the recognition of moral greatness, when it happened to be separate from rank, and power, and numbers and success. Never more foolish than in despising the lovely but helpless greatness of some lonely soul. We speak comparatively, of course, for we can find no other Christ, only reflections of Him; we can hardly produce another Herod, we must take in his stead respectable people. And perhaps the irony is subtler when this kind of Herod sets some humbler Christ at nought.

Can one find, for instance, any worse sinner than that historical body which ought to have the keenest appreciation of goodness and extend to it the quickest recognition—I mean the Church of Jesus Christ. Hundreds of times during the nineteen centuries since our Lord was insulted by Herod have men, spotless in their lives, and

famous for their works, stood before tribunals to be cruelly and unjustly judged. For what? Because they refused to say what they could not understand, or what they believed to be false. Did it help any of them in that hour that they were holy men? Not one whit. It made their judges more anxious to condemn them, and an ecclesiastical court trying a man for heresy is the only court that will refuse a testimony to character as irrelevant. Yet if it be anything it is a moral court, and if it knows anything it ought to understand that spiritual knowledge is conditional upon holy living. Did it matter that in many cases the judges presiding over such courts and dealing with such men were not beyond reproach? Not in the slightest. When the unworthy judge sent the good man to death, rarely any one cried shame. John Huss came to the Council of Constance with a safe conduct, and was burnt, but a little later the Borgias reigned in Rome. The Society of Friends, the most Christlike of all religious bodies, was persecuted for years in England, and evil living ministers left untouched. McLeod Campbell, one of the most saintly ministers of the Scots

Kirk, was cast out by an almost unanimous vote of the chief court because he gave Christ's love too wide a range, but as a moderate drunkard in the former half of last century he had been perfectly safe. Have we finally learned that it is far more important that a man live like Jesus than think with us, and do we to-day recognize holiness of character as a finer test than correctness of opinion ?

Pass from the Church to the State and compare two types of men which appeal for our suffrages and support. One is smart, shrewd, unscrupulous and time serving, who will suit his views to the day, will conciliate every dangerous interest, will seize every opportunity of harassing his opponents, and will make a gain for his party out of the welfare of the State. We know quite well that he is morally a low-class man. The other is earnest, thoughtful, high-minded, and honourable, who will say what he believes to be true, and do what he thinks to be right, who has no private ends to serve, who will sacrifice everything for the good of the commonwealth. We know quite well that he is morally a high-class man. The one is clever, so

clever that we chuckle over his adroitness, as if he were a thimble-rigger. The other is good, so good that we are uncomfortable with him, as if he were a saint. Which will more likely gain the ear of average people? Will cleverness be condemned because the man is worthless? Will goodness be approved, though it be not showy? Is not unscrupulous cleverness admired and rewarded if the man be a partisan? Is not self-sacrificing and capable goodness depreciated and rejected because the man refuses to be the tool of a party or the instrument of shady interests? And is not this the contempt of goodness?

Are we not committing the same lamentable mistake in private society? By our side people are living gloriously, but their excellence is that of the Kingdom of God—faith and patience, sacrifice and purity. They are refusing ease, they are disdaining mean work, they are sinking themselves, they are toiling for no seen reward. It may be a wife or a husband, or a friend or a fellow labourer, and our eyes have been holden, while all the time we are vastly impressed by people who are bright, and witty, and handsome, and fashionable. We wish to

be like them; we make disparaging comparisons between them and the bearers of Christ's cross. Fools that we are, to live day by day beside this heavenly beauty, and to hanker after the tinsel of worldly character. The day may come when we shall wake to realize our loss, when the light fades from our home, and the Christ by our side is taken. We shall understand then what we have belittled, and how we have sinned.

No one can exaggerate the calamity of this contempt; it is a sin against the Holy Ghost. Where could Herod find that day the most convincing revelation of the Almighty? Not in the Temple of Jerusalem, with its splendid buildings and hallowed memory, for its ministers were unbelieving priests. Nor in the synagogue, with all the reading of the prophets and the preaching of the law, for there fanatics were wrangling about vain doctrines. The dwelling place of God that day was a man clothed in poor garments, and rejected by all. There was in Jesus more of God than could be found in a whole world, and He was set at nought. How unconscious we are of our worst errors, and of our spiritual disasters. Herod, profane

as he was, would have thought it dreadful to have rifled the Temple, and carried away the sacred vessels, to have used the veil of the holiest of all for a curtain in his banqueting chamber, and to have set the golden candlesticks among his wine cups. But that would have been a trifling sin beside this fearful sacrilege of insulting Jesus.

We all have our ideas of reverence and would not lightly outrage them. We bare our heads in a church, because God meets His people there, we treat the Bible differently from other books, because God in a special sense speaks there. So much we do for a house and for a book, and we make little of those in whom God is living,

> Who are fulfilled of Godhead as a cup
> Filled with a precious essence.

Be sure there is no revelation of God so near, and so clear, none which can do so much for us, or which lays on us such a responsibility, as the character of good people. It is visible, active, flesh and blood goodness, the very incarnation of the divine grace. You remember how in Browning's *Christmas Eve* the super-

cilious visitor found that God had been among the poor chapel folk, and how God was leaving him because he had despised them.

> No face; only the sight
> Of a sweeping garment, vast and white,
> With a hem that I could recognize.

To have the hem of Christ's "sweeping garment" touch us, and then to fling it aside with contempt, because it comes in the shape of ordinary people, is not only one of the master sins, but also one of the irreparable losses of life.

X

WORLDLINESS: A FRAME OF MIND

"And be not conformed to this world."—*Romans* xii. 2.

AS "world" has various meanings in Holy Scripture "worldliness" is an ambiguous word, and we must understand what is intended by the world against which the apostle warned those Roman Christians, and which throughout the apostolic writings is regarded as the enemy of the soul. Sometimes world means the earth, which is the home of the race, and sometimes it means the race itself. It goes without saying that none of us should look askance on this fair creation as if it were a snare for the soul, or restrain our affection for our brethren as if there lurked a subtle danger in human love. When an ascetic went forth to fulfil his vocation without bidding his mother good-bye, and when he walked the livelong day by the Lake of Geneva and never looked upon its beauty, he neither gained any merit of self-denial nor conquered any sin. He despised the

love of home and the works of his Heavenly Father, and closing his eyes to one innocent world outside his soul he set up another of spiritual pride within. For the artificial religion which regards natural affection and physical beauty with suspicion there is no sanction in the teaching of our Master, who amid the agonies of the cross bethought Him of His mother, and to whom nature was an endless delight. It is a morose fanaticism which would confound love with idolatry; it is an unredeemed barbarism which mutilated the statues on the Acropolis, and the cathedrals of our own land. The physical world Jesus used as a parable of spiritual things, and for the world of men He laid down His life. As often as religion is hostile either to loveliness or to love, it is not to be praised for unworldliness, but to be condemned for ignorance, which understands neither the works of the Lord nor the sympathy of His heart.

It was of another world Jesus was thinking when He said in His last discourse, "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world," and of which St. John wrote, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Before His mind was that Jewish generation which from the be-

ginning had suspected Him, and which in the end came to hate Him, with its vain traditions, its hollow conventions, its overweening self-righteousness, its hatred of foreign nations, and its indifference to brotherly love. This world had its own attraction and power; it could enrich and honour, or it could persecute and destroy a man. And the temptation which beset Christ's disciples was to come to terms with their world, to repeat its acts, to accept its ideals, to further its ends. Once this world cast for a moment its tangling net round Simon Peter, and the apostle besought his Lord to avoid the cross. And the same influence led Judas Iscariot captive, when for thirty pieces of silver he sold his friend, and gaining as it seemed at one stroke the whole world lost himself for ever.

When St. Paul lifted up his voice against the world, and besought the Christians committed to his charge to be separate from it, he was thinking of that imposing paganism which was ever fronting them. With its love of pleasure, its glorification of power, its imperial pageantry, its idolatrous temples, its unredeemed Art, its seduction both for the senses and for the intellect, paganism cast its glamour over the new Christian

converts. Writers so far apart as Cardinal Newman in his *Callista* and the author of *Quo Vadis* suggest to our minds the fascinating atmosphere into which Christianity was born, and where in its youth it had to fight the good fight of faith. Beneath the beauty of form and colour, the magnificence of ceremonies and arms, the arts and riches of civilization, that was an unclean and leprous world. Whether they lived in Corinth, with its unblushing worship of lust, or in Rome, which was the moral sewer of the world, or in Ephesus, where Christians were tempted by the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, or in Pergamos, where there were those who held the abominable doctrine of Balaam, or in Thyatira, where Jezebel seduced God's servants, or in Sardis, where only a few had not defiled their garments, Christians had ever to stand on guard. No wonder that some in Corinth had fallen through the lures of the flesh, or that a Demas had forsaken the faith before that imperial magnificence. Christians had to choose between their Lord and their world, and it was a world hard to escape or to resist.

It is evident that the world of to-day has changed, and it is unreasonable to require of

modern Christians the line of action which was necessary in the first century. The spirit of Christ has counted for something during nineteen centuries, and Western society is not arrayed in arrogant hostility to the claims and ethics of our Master. His disciples are neither persecuted nor seduced after the fashion of the former days, and it is not necessary to preach that separation which once was compulsory, nor to warn against the gross temptations which once beset the disciple from street and temple, from book and Art. Religious writers have shown a want of historical insight in adopting those fiery denunciations of the world which applied to the Corinth of St. Paul and the Rome of Juvenal. This does not mean that there is no anti-Christian world or that Christians have not need to watch and pray; it only means that war has changed its form, and instead of the clash of swords we have the unseen danger of the rifle. We have to get to the principle which underlies all forms, and what constitutes the world in every age is devotion to the material instead of to the spiritual. It is the overweening appreciation of pleasure, rank, riches, learning, and Art. If any one values silver and

gold more than character, or loses his self-respect before persons of high station, or assigns duty a second place to ease, or is more concerned about the opinion of men than the judgment of conscience, or is better pleased by the triumph of a party than the reign of righteousness, or is satisfied with Art which has no high purpose, to whom in short the things which pass are more than the things which remain, you see the power of this world, and a worldly man.

Worldliness in essence consists not in certain acts of the outer life but in a certain temper of mind. A woman need not be worldly because she dresses well, and has an engaging manner, and is popular in society, for in this case there would be nothing so worldly as a flower; and it does not follow that a man is worldly because he is successful in business, or obtains high office, or is praised by his fellows, for this were a reflection on capacity, enterprise, and good-humour. Unworldliness must not be identified with a squalid appearance, a forbidding countenance, slackness of work, or Pharisaism of tone. It does not prove worldliness to play games, to read fiction, to enjoy sport; it is not more worldly to play billiards than bowls,

to take a hand at whist than to talk scandal, for young people to dance rather than join in the silly games which used to be a substitute for dancing, or to take a walk on Sunday rather than to sleep at home. Worldliness has been too much defined by artificial observances and conventional tests, so that a person was counted unworldly not on account of his likeness in character to Christ, but because he did not do certain things which the religious party of his day disapproved.

Worldliness is a tricky and capricious spirit which disappoints and surprises by its dwelling places. When the Church of Christ chooses men for office, not on account of their spirituality, but of their possessions, or when a man is placed in the chair at a religious conference, not for his capacity, but for his title, or when the success of the ministry is estimated by statistics of seat-holders and of money, or when the officers of Christ's Church make bargains with politicians, or when an aged Christian on whom the world to come is already breaking babbles about his investments, or when some pious woman who often laments the decay of religion, complains of a social slight, then you see worldliness in its most dangerous form, making

itself at home in the very sanctuary of God. When on the other hand you see a woman giving her husband to death in the service of his country, or a man of science living in bare simplicity that he may pursue his discoveries, or a writer scorning to fall beneath his ideal for the sake of gain, or a teacher declaring an unpopular opinion for the love of truth, or a person in society showing special courtesy to people of humbler rank or plainer appearance, or a working man sacrificing his own interest for the benefit of his less gifted fellows, you have the satisfaction of recognizing unworldliness where you were not prepared to find it. It may be safely said that worldliness has never had a more instructive illustration than in ecclesiastics, and unworldliness a more convincing illustration than in men of science.

That worldliness which seems consistent with the most rigid orthodoxy, and that unworldliness which has sometimes risen to its height in the atmosphere of reverent agnosticism, can be studied in two characteristic biographies of our own time. One is that of a late Bishop of Oxford, a man of honourable family, large social influence, most brilliant gifts, and undeniable personal piety, and

the other is the life of the pioneer of natural science in our day, and one of the most patient lovers of knowledge of any day, Charles Darwin. The former was not only, as we fully acknowledge, a devout private Christian, but also a high ruler in the Christian Church, yet he divided the energy of his public life between two ends, toiling in the service of the Church, and scheming for his own advancement. When he was not defending the Christian creed he was canvassing for promotion, and how to reconcile the piety and the intriguing passes one's imagination. The latter was an agnostic who with sad honesty found himself unable to accept the Christian faith, and who consecrated to science his strength and his means. He was a man without greed of wealth, indifferent to public honour, patient of criticism, ready to admire every successful worker, and maintaining a hospitable mind for truth from any quarter, a modest, pure-living, retiring, self-forgetful student. The ecclesiastic represents the type of worldliness tinged with religion, the naturalist the type of unworldliness with no conscious aid from religion. And the climax of the contrast was reached when at a meeting of a British association at Oxford the

eloquent Bishop denounced Darwin and his views with, as has been said "inimitable spirit, emptiness and unfairness." He finally allowed himself to ask Huxley whether he was related on his grandfather's or his grandmother's side to an ape, and Mr. Huxley replied—"If there were an ancestor, sir, whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a man of restless and versatile intellect who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice."

The audacity of worldliness, which settles within the province of faith itself, and the subtlety which is Proteus-like in its disguises, warns Christians to judge themselves with care and severity. If our Master did anything, He founded a society whose standard was to be character, and whose ends were to be spiritual, in which the things which are true and beautiful, and gentle and gracious are to be counted the chief good. Was it worth His dying if the brotherhood of Galilee should become a huge

trust, quarrelling over property, tyrannizing over men's consciences, giving precedence to the rich over the poor, and rivalling the rulers of this world in its cunning? Was it any use His calling men, and inviting them to carry His cross, if the only difference between the disciples of Christ and the children of this world be the profession of a creed which is divorced from obedience, and the practise of a Pharisaic holiness which stands rather in the washing of hands and the titheing of mint, than in a clean heart and the service of men.

XI

PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE THE CONDITION OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

"If any man will do His, will he shall know of the doctrine."—*St. John* vii. 17.

IT is startling to notice the class in the Jewish nation which was most perplexed by Jesus' teaching and the class which entered most kindly into His mind. As it happened, there was one audience which by its intellectual culture, its minute Biblical knowledge, its religious traditions, and its Church instincts, seemed to have been specially prepared for Jesus. And it also happened that He had another audience which, by its want of education, its ignorance of theology, its exclusion from the religious circle, and the burden of daily labour seemed to be incapacitated to receive His spiritual message. One would have predicted that the Scribes and Pharisees would have had an easy mastery of Jesus' doctrine, and that the common people would have

found it a foreign language; but it was the experts with all their advantages who failed, and the unlearned who succeeded in this new school. Although we are so accustomed to the Gospels, there are still times when one is utterly perplexed, because the religious circle of Jesus' day had not the remotest idea that He was the long-expected Messiah, or even that He was a perfectly convincing teacher of religion, but came to the conclusion that He was a dangerous heretic and a destroyer of faith. And one is also perplexed that the outside circle who were despised by the Pharisees and talked down to, just as outside people are judged and preached to by the religious circle to-day, should have responded to Jesus so quickly, and should have given Him such satisfaction. It was as if the recognized religious class of our day who address meetings, and ask people if they are converted, and talk of their neighbours as worldly, and are very keen about certain doctrines, should have denounced Jesus and persecuted Him when He came with His Sermon on the Mount, and His parables of the divine love, while a large number of quiet people who have never made any profession and have

never dared to consider themselves religious should have deeply appreciated Jesus and have become His faithful disciples. If you imagine this state of things you will understand how perplexing the situation is and must always be until we get its key.

Jesus Himself was not surprised, but declared that while there was no obstacle to the people understanding His doctrine, the Pharisees laboured under a hopeless disability. They considered it enough to judge Christ's words by the intellect, and did not feel it necessary to obey them in life, while the people who made no pretensions to expert knowledge forsook their sins, and so qualified themselves to receive Jesus' teaching. It was a question of method—how to understand—and since the Pharisees clung to their arid theology they made no progress, whilst the others accepted the ethics of Jesus and so attained. The Pharisees, notwithstanding their knowledge, which is not to be despised, failed to understand the evangel of Jesus, because, as He used to insist, they had the wrong temper of life. They received honour of men, contending for chief seats in the synagogue and upper places at feasts,

making much of traditional doctrine and social customs, being self-righteous about themselves and censorious about other people. The people, notwithstanding their ignorance, which is never to be made light of, received Christ's Gospel, because they had a humble idea of themselves, were penitent about their sins, did not stand at the corner of the streets offering public prayer, were anxious to do better and were willing to keep Christ's commandments. The Pharisees would not obey and so they could not know, the people did obey and so they came to know. It was a question of moral not intellectual disability; or, in other words, right living is the road in the spiritual world to true thinking.

As this is a very grave principle and has a most searching application, we ought to fix in our minds what exactly Jesus intended by His words when He speaks of knowing the doctrine and doing the will. By true thinking He does not mean being acquainted with the various dogmas which scientific religion has from time to time created and into whose mould the fluid idea concerning spiritual truth has been run. Dogmas are the achievement of the intellect, and the

Pharisees were exceedingly strong in their dogmatic knowledge. When Jesus speaks of doctrine He is referring to the burden of His own teaching, and the sum of all His teaching was God. His aim was to impress the mind with a certain idea of God, and it was a moral rather than an intellectual conception. You do not find Jesus enlarging upon the existence and attributes of God after the manner, say, of the Athanasian Creed. He said nothing about the being of God, but He endeavoured to convince men that God was the merciful and faithful Father of the human race; that He loved men, both good and bad, with a patient fatherly love; that He desired His children to abandon their sins and come home to His fellowship; that He was ready to receive them if they would only trust and obey Him. This was not theology, it was religion. It was not God's being but God's doing that Jesus preached, not His nature but His character. He desired not that men should solve problems about God, but that they should have fellowship with Him. No man, however learned, will ever be able to comprehend God: no man, however ignorant, if he has begun to obey in all

sincerity may not have a true knowledge of God.

Again, when Jesus lays down this condition of obedience He speaks with careful and charitable qualification. He does not say that before a man can know God he must be able to do God's will, for this were to dash our hopes to the ground. No one has ever been able to do God's will perfectly, save Jesus Himself, just as He alone has had a perfect knowledge of God. What Jesus asks is that a man desire to do God's will, that he be not tricky or insincere like the Pharisees, playing false with God and with his own conscience in the matter of duty, but that wherever he sees the path before him he strive to walk therein. As one has said, "It is not the finding out what God desires to be done which is difficult, it is the doing it." Our conscience in nine cases out of ten tells us what to do as clearly as if a voice spoke from Heaven, and in the tenth case light would arise to the righteous. The Pharisees, for instance, were perfectly aware that they had not done their duty by the people; that was one reason why they were angry with Jesus, and why they were alienated from God. Their pro-

fessions were enormous towards God and insolent towards men; their practice was very faulty towards both. If we hear our conscience and set our face to duty, it will be with us as with the traveller who ascends the Gemmi Pass. When he comes to the foot of the precipice along whose ledges and through whose crevices the narrow path ascends, the mist may be lying heavy, and at first he may not find the starting point. Once his feet are upon the path, although he cannot see beyond a few yards and has no idea how the path may wind it is only a matter of dogged and careful perseverance. With every step the mist grows more luminous, glimpses of the crest can now and again be caught, and suddenly the traveller comes out from the cloud into the clear sunlight on the height, with the spotless snow around him and the blue of God's heaven over his head. He that wills to do God's will shall come to know God's will before set of sun.

It were difficult to mention a more dangerous fallacy in the religious world than that which separates life from truth, and supposes that a person may know without doing or do without knowing. And few of us have escaped its con-

tagion. We have made a distinction like that which obtains in physical science, where one department deals with the principles of mathematics, and another applies those principles to the forces of nature. We imagine that there may be two spheres in religion, one of pure and the other of applied truth. So we speak of a person who knows the truth well without practising it, and of another who lives excellently but who is ignorant of the truth. If this were really so it would be an awful calamity, for what could be more injurious to himself than for one to enshrine the knowledge of God in the unholy place of a wicked life, or anything more cruel than for one to be bravely doing his duty and yet to be left in the outer darkness regarding God. As a matter of fact either position is a moral contradiction. No doubt it is as easy for a selfish man to learn his Catechism as to learn Euclid, but this is neither to know God nor to be saved. It is also possible for one to keep the commandments of Jesus and yet not hold the Christian dogma, but it does not follow that he does not know God. It is repulsive to the moral sense to believe that one who is not keeping Christ's law can have Christ's revelation

of the Father, or that one who carries Christ's cross can miss the light of His Father's face?

Christ's deliverance, that you must obey in order to know, is in keeping with His idea of faith. Faith with Jesus was a moral word, and had to do with the will. It meant trust, surrender, loyalty, service; it meant "follow Me," and by following Me know My Father. Our Master believed that there was in every man a faculty of divine knowledge, which may be called the moral sense, and to this faculty Jesus appealed. He did not disparage reason, but as a religious teacher He did not desire to place on reason a burden it could not bear. God is not reason but love, and it is therefore as impossible for reason to know God as to see a picture with your ear. We would not allow ourselves to say God is able—it is profanity; we gladly say He is kind—it is piety. Reason has her own province, the acquisition of intellectual knowledge; the moral sense has her province, the acquisition of spiritual knowledge. As one has said, "In things secular we must know in order to love, in things spiritual we must love in order to know," which means that the knowledge of God comes through

fellowship of character. As a pool reflects the sun in its bosom, so is God revealed in the mirror of our soul. Just as the moral sense is bright shall we see God, just as it is dark shall we miss the heavenly vision. It will not help us that we be clever if we be proud, it will not hinder us that we be simple if we be humble.

There are two people whom Jesus' words ought to warn, and the first is the man who supposes that he knows the doctrine, but is not doing the will. Is he sure that he knows anything which counts when his knowledge is so absolutely divorced from life? He has a very strong theory about the inspiration of the Bible, but what good is his devotion to the letter when the spirit of the Book has not affected his heart? He believes that he knows God, but how can he, for God is love, and this man is not loving his brother? He is very keen about the deity of Christ, but what right has he to speak of Christ since he will not carry Christ's cross in mercy and humility. He is convinced that his sins are forgiven, and prates about assurance, but can they be loosed if he will not give quittance to his brother man? He has an unfaltering confidence that he will reach

Heaven when he dies, but what place can he have in Heaven who to-day is carrying a hell of unclean or malignant passions in his heart? The other person is one who is proud of his scepticism, and complains that he cannot know, while all the time he is refusing to obey. Granted that the Holy Trinity and the Sacrifice of Christ are mysteries, and that God Himself is the chief mystery of all, he ought to remember that everything in life is not a mystery. It is open to us all to do our daily work with a single mind, to be patient amid the reverses of life, to be thoughtful in the discharge of our family duties, and to be self-denying in the management of our souls. Duty at any rate is no mystery, and it is grotesque that a man should proclaim that he cannot believe the most profound truths when he is making no honest effort to keep the plainest commandments. It has been my lot to hear a young man explain that he could no longer be a Christian because he had been reading Herbert Spencer, and to urge him to lay Spencer on the shelf and to try to be a better son to his widowed mother. Till he was a faithful son one paid no attention either to what he did or what he didn't

believe about God, any more than to what one tells you about the stars who is looking through a blind telescope. And it has been my satisfaction to receive a letter from a woman who has had a hard battle to believe, saying, "I have come to the conclusion that work is the panacea for a multitude of evils. I have now no time for brooding over unfathomable mysteries. The sorrows and the sufferings here (she is nurse in a great London hospital) are stimulating rather than depressing, being so much material for work, and one forgets self entirely through the long day."

Jesus' word has great comfort for two people, and the first is the man who is harassed by many perplexing questions but who is doing his duty bravely. Courage, I dare to say to you, and patience. No one ever carried Christ's cross without coming near to Christ Himself, and where Christ is, the light is sure to break. No sacrifice you make, no service you render, but is bringing you nearer to the heart of things, for the heart of the universe is love. Watch as those who watch for the morning, and watch at your work, for the day will break and it will come with morning songs. St. Thomas could hardly believe any-

thing, but he was willing to die with Christ, and Christ showed him His wounds.

The other person is one who laments the simplicity of his intellect. Be of good cheer, I would say to you, and do not despair or despise yourself. The Master thanked God that He had hidden the deep things from the wise and had revealed them unto babes; He also set a child in the midst of the disciples and told them that if any one desired to be great he must become as a little child. It is not through deep thinking but faithful doing that one comes to know the mystery of God, and faithful doing is within every one's reach. The path which philosophers and scientists have often missed has been found by shepherds on the hills, and by working women. Mary of Bethany and the fishermen of Galilee knew more of God than the scholars of Jerusalem.

St. Francis, his disciples said, carried on him the wounds of the Lord Jesus, and an ancient master represented them blazing with light as he lay upon his bier, so that the dead body of the saint was set in the brightness of the stigmata. It was a parable that no one may separate light from love or Christ's teaching from Christ's cross.

Just in proportion as we are made partakers of His sufferings shall we be partakers of His gospel, just as we are willing to do the will of God shall we know the doctrine of God. And step by step we shall come to know God Himself, Whom to know is life everlasting.

XII

FULFILMENT, NOT DESTRUCTION, THE METHOD OF JESUS

"I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."—*St. Matthew* v. 17.

IT is evident that our Lord's critics had been denouncing Him as an intellectual and social anarchist, and one can imagine their evidence. Here, they would say, is one who has assumed the office of a prophet, and what is the line of His teaching? He blows aside the venerable tradition of the fathers as if it were scum on the surface of the water; He belittles those social rites which have been a fence round the national life; He shows no respect to the religious party, but associates freely with the outcasts of society. He even dares to correct Moses himself, saying, "You were told to do that, but I tell you to do this." There will soon be no truth so sure that He will not upset it, no custom so wholesome that He will not abolish it. He is attacking

the foundations of Church and State, loosening the faith of the individual, and breaking the bonds of society. Perhaps it would be somewhat unscrupulous to put the case in this way against Jesus, but the Pharisees were not fastidiously honourable in their controversies. And if our Lord had taken up the same position in our day would He have been treated with much more candour? Suppose a person in Christ's time were a prejudiced theologian, or had an obstinate temper, was it not natural that he should be shocked by the sayings of Jesus? And so he may have come honestly to believe that Jesus was not a builder but a destroyer.

It is also evident that Jesus keenly resented this charge, and one can understand His reasons. When He was called a glutton and a wine bibber He was not gravely concerned, for a gross slander answers itself: when He was called a revolutionary there was enough truth in the criticism to make it dangerous. He did appear on first sight not to improve but to reverse the past, not to attack abuses but to uproot institutions, and if this had been so it would have been a serious reflection, both upon the wisdom and the work

of Jesus. Destruction is not the principle of growth in any province of God's universe. Nature advances, not by catastrophe but by evolution. The buds of next year are already visible when the leaves of autumn fall; types merge in higher antitypes; and so God works everything up into something better. Nations advance most surely, not along the line of revolution but of reform. Science would stultify herself if she cast down the achievements of past knowledge and began with every generation to build upon an open site. The teacher who has no piety for former things, and attacks what has been most firmly held, is to be gravely distrusted. He has neither humility nor sanity. He may produce a sensation, of real action he is incapable. No success can be obtained by negative teaching, no progress can be achieved by assault. He only does permanent work who builds upon "the foundations of many generations"; who is not a destroyer but a fulfiller.

Had the opponents of Jesus been able to take a fairer view of His work, they would have found that He was the opposite of what their fears painted. He did the highest honour to Moses,

for He charged the ten commandments with a new spiritual meaning, and invested them with a new spiritual beauty, so that the greenery of spring came upon the bare branches, and the austere words of Sinai changed into the commandment of love. If Jesus gave little heed to the washing of hands, and the titheing of mint, He taught His disciples the higher duty of a clean heart, and identified holiness not with ritual but with righteousness. Under His spirit the God of Abraham and Jacob became our Heavenly Father, to be worshipped the world over wherever there was an honest heart. What the prophets had imagined Jesus revealed, and upon the strong morality of Judaism He raised that more generous kingdom, which is righteousness, peace and joy. If the temple of Jerusalem was to pass away the whole world would become the Temple of God, and if the Jewish nation lost their exclusive position as the "servant of the Lord," the sceptre of a greater David would rule from the rising to the setting of the sun. If old forms perished, the spirit would have freer course; if an over-ripe harvest fell before the sickle, it was to be the seed of wider fields.

Fulfilment is the guiding principle of all successful progress and ought to control every department of action. When, for instance, we attempt the regeneration of society, repression may be needful as a temporary measure; but repression is a policy of despair. It coerces, but it does not control; it terrifies, but it does not satisfy. We ought to go to the root of the matter and find out the causes which create the vices of the people. It is not enough to lessen the temptations to drunkenness, for instance; we must find out the reason why men play the fool after this fashion. Were we to shut up the drunkards of the country in one inebriate asylum, and then prevent every other person from obtaining intoxicating drink, we should not have secured the salvation of the nation or have fulfilled the mind of Christ. Why do men drink and do the other things? What are they seeking after? Is it not the case that they go to public-houses because their own homes are not attractive; that they intoxicate themselves because they have no more wholesome excitement; that they are thriftless because with irregular labour they have no inducement to save; and that they sink to the depths of

misery because they have no hope? The gaol, the asylum, and the casual ward are not the answer to this problem, nor all the laws that can be passed by Parliament. The springs of disease must be staunched, and the hopelessness of the people lifted. Recently a brewer told me that the takings of his company over a large number of public-houses were going steadily down because the working men preferred to spend the evening in a music-hall. This is one of the best things I have ever heard of music-halls. They have done what a temperance appeal could not accomplish—because they have not robbed, they have substituted. You cannot repress human nature, but you can direct it; you cannot kill its instincts, but you can raise them. When every man has a decent home and access to pure enjoyment, then the gross evils which batten upon the multitude at the base of society will disappear, and the corporate life of the people will be redeemed, as when some hideous waste strewn with obscene rubbish is covered by green grass and white flowers.

The same principle holds in the elimination of sin from an individual life. To sin is to miss the

mark; the arrow went astray, and struck the wrong place. Every vice is the inversion of a virtue, it is degenerate goodness. Discontentment is the querulous ghost of a high ambition which might have attempted bold things. The black mood of jealousy is distorted affection. Avarice is the corruption of the desire of possession. Bad temper is the heat which might have been wholesome indignation. Lust itself is the loathsome travesty of love. Moralists of the second order would advise a man to put his sins under lock and key: Jesus teaches men to expel them. He would transform temptations to sin and make them incentives to holiness; He would have us concern ourselves not with the destruction of the evil but with the cultivation of the good. When one works with his might he has no time to be fretful. When he regards his neighbour with charity he has no room for envy. When he expends his enthusiasm on the highest ends he has no steam left for peddling quarrels. When one loves the best he knows, he is raised above low passions.

With this principle of fulfilment we ought also to approach the erroneous ideas which affect the

popular mind and are rivals of the truth. It is the cheapest plan to denounce them, and to mock the people who are satisfied with such make-shifts. It is not good policy, for it does not make converts of the heretics, and it is apt to make Pharisees of the censors. Does it not stand to reason that people would not listen greedily to such pseudo gospels unless they were in search of something, and would it not be wiser to give them what they seek in its most perfect form? Their mistakes are unconscious petitions for truth, their halting systems are unidentified fragments of knowledge. Ritualism is the longing for symbols which Jesus met in His parabolic treatment of nature and His institution of the Sacraments. It is the effort of the vine to climb by a framework nearer to the sun, and any excess is best cured, not by removing but by extending the principle till all life become the transparent veil of the divine. Positivism is an effort to get at reality and the discovery of God within humanity.

> Where mercy, grace and pity dwell
> There God is dwelling too.

He who finds God in a pure woman or in a noble

deed will surely not miss Him in His heaven. Agnosticism is the re-action from an unlicensed affirmation about spiritual mysteries, and has its own place in Christianity where Jesus treated the unseen world with such suggestive reserve, and taught men that he who did the will of God would come to know God's truth. What has given "Christian Science" its attraction is the authority of the mind over the body, and was not Christ for ever teaching the supremacy of the spiritual? It is wiser to give a man what he is seeking after than to denounce its imperfect substitute. It is, indeed, of no use to take away unless you can bestow, and therefore the wise missionary of to-day finds out what the non-Christian religion means, and shows that it is a prophecy of Christ. It may be expedient sometimes to defend Christianity, it is better to proclaim it; it may be necessary sometimes to attack another religion, it is more gracious to satisfy it. It is the unknown God whom men are seeking through many systems and after many fashions; it is the known God whom Jesus reveals and presents to us all.

Just as religion appears to us a fulfilment or a

destruction of life, shall we come to love or hate it. If religion be nothing but a refusing and denying, a repressing and mortifying, then it may be a necessity; it is also a burden. But this is not the religion of Jesus as He taught and illustrated it in the life of Galilee. With Him religion was not a bondage, but the breaking of fetters, that the sons of God might enter into the liberty of their Father's House; not the limitation of the frontiers of human nature, but the conquest of new unimagined provinces; not the imposition of a catalogue of commandments, each forbidding something, but the entrance into a world of engaging virtues; not another dreary shadow cast across human life, which is joyless enough already, but the rising of the sun with healing under his wings on the reason, the conscience, and the affections of every man. Religion according to Jesus not only cal s us to the marriage feast of life, religion turns its water into wine.

XIII

CHARACTER THE SPRING OF LIFE

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."—*St. Matthew* xii. 35.

THIS is the compact statement of a truth upon which Jesus laid the last emphasis—that everything depends on character. The word has two meanings. And according to its original sense character is the mark made upon a stone by engraving. It is therefore the stamp of the soul and the expression of a man's being. It is equivalent to nature, it is the very man himself. Character has also come to acquire a secondary meaning which has much less value in the moral currency. It is not now what the man is, and will continue to be, but what he says he is or appears to be. It is the impression he has produced in certain circumstances, the effect of certain public actions, the attitude which he assumes to the world. It is the outer show of the man: it is his reputation.

One profound difference between our Master and the Pharisees turned upon the reading of this word. With the Pharisees, character was reputation, and their whole strength was given to performing a religious play. With Jesus character was nature, and He was ever insisting that a man must be judged not by appearance but by the heart ; not by what he says, or even by what he does, but by what he is. They made religion a thing of the outer life ; He declared it a thing of the inner life and He was hotly indignant with their blatant unreality. Jesus despaired of the Pharisees while He hoped great things from the sinners, for this simple reason—that the sinners at least were honest, while the Pharisees were thoroughly dishonest. When they gave alms it was to the sound of trumpets, not because they loved the poor ; and when they prayed it was in a public place, not because they loved God. They were irreligious from Christ's standpoint, not because they were doing irreligious things, but because they had irreligious hearts. They were hypocrites, not because they were living a double life, but because they were playing a calculated part. They were moral actors, and therefore

the white flame of Jesus' anger was ever glancing round the Pharisees.

Common speech betrays our implicit conviction, and every day we ourselves acknowledge the supremacy of character. One man may use the most persuasive words, but no one gives heed because they are not the outcome of a true soul; another may speak with rough simplicity, and his neighbours respond because every word bears the stamp of a brave heart. When a good man loses his temper or is easily offended or grasps at some advantage, or fails in courage, we say that he was "not himself." This act was foreign to the man, a caricature of his spiritual likeness. When a good man carries himself right knightly we say that was "like him," as if we had a portrait before our eyes, and this act was its replica. We charge our friend in time of temptation to be loyal to his highest self, to be himself, and to play the man. We speak after this fashion, not in the pulpit only, but on the street; so we bear unconscious witness that Jesus was right, and that the man's heart is himself.

If character be the spring of life then two things follow, and the first is that every man's work is

the expression of himself. Just as the Almighty is ever creating under a divine necessity, because He must express Himself, and just as His character can be discovered by those who have eyes to see in the parable of creation, so every man works under the same compulsion, and reveals himself by the fruit of his hands. Every man is doing something, whether it be good or evil. You cannot stamp out a spring, and from his secret self a man's life is ever flowing, and carrying with it the colour of its origin. Why does a poet write his verse, or an artist paint his picture, or a minister preach his sermon, or an artisan do his carving? Because the idea was in him, and he must be delivered of it. His self is in the work, and it is the unconscious exposure of his innermost being.

The largest and most convincing illustration of this principle is architecture, where the theology of the builders is written in masterful letters before the eyes of the world. A mosque with its wide space, high roof, bare walls, freedom from all imagery, declares by its purity and dignity that God is a spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. A Gothic cathedral with its

long aisles, shadowy recesses, secluded chancel, and high altar, witnesses to the mystery of the Holy Incarnation, the awfulness of Christ's sacrifice, the solemnity of the sacraments and the authority of the priesthood. Upon a typical Nonconformist church, without altar or prayer desk, with its platform for the speaker and its audience chamber for the people might be inscribed, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." Each building is a creed wrought in stone, and proclaims to the whole world the deepest conviction of the builder. "I believe in the unity of God," says the Mohammedan; "I believe in the sacrifice of the mass," says the Catholic; "I believe in the Gospel," says the Puritan.

Within the history of the same faith one can see how the architecture corresponds with the religion, either in its days of austere purity or of luxurious decay. If you wish to study Christianity at its best, visit one of the old Gothic churches, and there you find not above the altar only, but in every line of the building the sign of the Cross. The builders were simple, fearless, pure, devout. If you wish to study Christianity

at its worst visit a church of the Renaissance with its veneer of marble, its glaring style, and its meretricious ornaments. It does not matter though it were plastered with crosses, from every stone it breathes the spirit of the world, and we know that the men who raised and decorated it were soft, proud, unbelieving, pagan. Even a man's home, so far as its form and furnishing depend upon himself, is a confession of character, so that you can imagine your host before he appears. As a man also is plainly declared by the friends with whom he associates, and the habits he has cultivated, and the expression of his face, and the accent of his speaking and the very manner of his walking.

Character, however, chiefly colours the actual work into which one puts his strength and which he does with intention. An experienced college tutor used to say that he could estimate a pupil by his handwriting, and within limits his judgment was true. Legibility and beauty depend no doubt upon technical skill ; but there is a moral element which is very suggestive, as if the life from the secret fountain flowed through the fingers. Certain hands with their crisp and decisive strokes

testify to a strong character ; certain with their slovenly and slithering letters reveal slackness and inefficiency. A man may fairly be classified by the bargain he makes, by the way he conducts a case, by his treatment of a patient, by the finish of a table. There are houses which will justify the builder and there are houses which will damn the builder in this world and possibly in the world to come. According as a man is true, so is his work ; in proportion as he is false, so is his work. One of the secrets of great art is sincerity, but if the soul be crooked the work will be a makeshift. It mattered not that the Pharisees whitewashed their lives, the rottenness was within, and the foulness oozed out and tainted the atmosphere. Ruskin discovered in a Venetian church the figure of a doge which is a perfect illustration of cheap and hypocritical work. One side of the forehead is wrinkled elaborately, the other left smooth, according as the public can see. One side only of the doge's cap is chased, one cheek only is finished. Finally the ermine robe which is imitated to its utmost lock of hair and of ground hair on one side is only blocked out on the other." " Who," says Ruskin, " with a heart in his breast

could have stayed his hand as he drew the dim lines of the old man's countenance, as he reached the bend of the gray forehead, and measured out the last veins of it at so many sequins." "Now," concludes Ruskin, "comes the very gist and point of the whole matter. This lying monument is at least veracious if in nothing else in its testimony to the character of the sculptor. He was banished from Venice for forgery in 1487." False heart, false work. From that hypocrite of art it is a relief to turn to a sincere man of letters, and everyone anxious to convince himself of the organic connexion between character and work should read both Lockhart's *Life of Sir Walter Scott*, and the "Waverley Novels." No fiction has ever so moved its readers to humility, purity, reverence and courage. Scott's novels are a moral inspiration and a substantial asset of religion. They have taught no man to doubt, nor made any woman blush. They have raised and not degraded the tone of society, and they were the living fruit of Scott's own soul, and the incarnation of his own ideals. Throughout the books breathe his own chivalrous temper who was one of the most gallant men, and most wholesome Christians in the history of Scotland or any land. True heart, true work.

Conduct as much as work springs from the heart, and by the heart must be judged. When we say right is who right does, and when we mean that we are bound in the first issue to estimate men by their visible deeds we are laying down a sound principle, but we must apply it with spiritual insight. Both God and man try conduct by subtler tests than the outward appearance, and two actions of the same kind may have a different moral complexion. Is it the same thing that a man live purely because he is afraid of the unspeakable consequences of vice, as that he keeps his body unstained, because it has been redeemed by the blood of Christ? Is calculating prudence on the same level as devout consecration, and do they prove an equal quality in the soul? Is it the same thing that a man should relieve the misery of his fellows, because they are part of the body of Jesus Christ, as that he should give a public subscription that his name may be passed from lip to lip? Are those two men of the same temper and breed? Which gift do we appreciate more ourselves, one given from abundance and from interested motives, or the poorer present of a child which has cost it long thought and self denial? We ourselves

pass behind acts to motives ; we also trace the life up to its birthplace. Men are loved who have been able to give but little because they gave it brotherly, fragrant with love ; men are hated who have given largely because they gave ostentatiously and inhumanly with cold and careless hand.

Before us also stands daily the two ideals of life, and we must choose between the Pharisees and Jesus. If this life be a stage and we be the players, with the world for spectators, then let us study our part carefully, so that by our pose and speech we may every moment please our fellow men, and earn their applause. Verily we shall have our reward. If this life be the school for the soul, and we be the sons of God, working and living continually in His presence, then let us not vex ourselves about the sound of our words upon our neighbours' ears, or the effect of our actions upon their judgment. Rather let us pray and strive that our inner self be cleansed from guile, possessed by love and consecrated to the Will of God. Whether men approve or condemn us it will be a light matter, for our judgment is with our Father which seeth in secret but rewardeth openly.

XIV

CHARACTER JUDGED BY ITS TREND

"And Simon Peter said unto Jesus, 'Lord, Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee.' Jesus said unto him, 'Feed My sheep.'"—*St. John* xxi. 17.

WHEN St. Peter, wrought into a mixed agony of love and penitence, made this daring appeal to the omniscience of the Lord, and obtained a decision, his case settled the basis of the Divine judgment upon character. It was one in which the average man with his rough and ready rules would have certainly blundered, and in which even persons of insight might have been perplexed. St. Peter was a friend of Jesus and had boasted loudly of loyalty; yet he had not only forsaken his Master with the rest, but had openly denied Him. He was a chosen apostle and set forth to be an example of holiness; yet he had confirmed his denial with swearing. Certainly he had received no money for his desertion; but otherwise, was there much difference between Iscariot and Simon?

Both were false, and Peter had made the louder profession and had held the more prominent place. He might say that he was still a true man and a lover of Jesus, but he could not reasonably expect a favourable verdict from any jury of his fellow men. If denying your friend with an oath in the black straits of life be affection, let us rather have a man's hatred. Facts are facts, his human judges would conclude, for this man to meet his Master and speak of love is shameless effrontery. He had better hide himself and never again mention the name of Jesus.

St. Peter had himself realized the hopelessness of the situation, and until Jesus sought him out he had been ashamed to meet with his fellow apostles. They could only have one mind of him, that he was a traitor, and yet he knew that while he was everything else that was bad, a boaster, a coward, a swearer, he was not a traitor. But to prove this was impossible. Against his protestation could be set his action, and men would only laugh if he talked of his intention. No man can open his heart to his neighbour and show its secret bias, no man can search his own heart and understand its workings. This tortured man could hardly

expect his fellows to understand him, for as he keenly remembered he had not understood himself. He was an insoluble enigma, and he had hoped that his Master would have done him justice. When Jesus seemed to repudiate his profession of love, then Peter made one last appeal. It is from his fellow men and from himself; it is even the words of Jesus to Jesus' unerring knowledge. "Lord, Thou knowest everything, all I said and all I did and all I am, but this Thou also knowest, that beneath the foul spume of my outer life, the deepest thing in my heart is love to Thee. By that love which has borne no fruit, which has failed in the hour of need, which has been mastered by fear, but which is real and is my very self, by that let me be judged. And Jesus confirmed his appeal and sent him forth upon his apostolic mission, saying, "Feed My sheep."

With only a surface knowledge of life we come to quick and absolute judgments, and therefore one understands the prayer, "Lord, deliver me from a young judge." People are divided into two classes with a clear-cut frontier, and each class is locked into its own country. So many people

are good, we say, with various enthusiastic adjectives; so many are bad with every kind of condemnation. So many we like with much warmth; so many we dislike with equal warmth. With a larger experience and a riper mind the dividing line begins to waver, and we are not so confident in either our approval or our disapproval. There may be a few saints in whom no fault can be found, and who are worthy to have walked with Christ in Galilee—we have known one or two such people. But on closer examination of the candidates for sainthood we are apt to be disillusionised, and to find that for the most part they are men of like passions with ourselves. One man comes short of perfection by his temper, another by his meanness, a third by his self-righteouness, a fourth by his vanity. Do the Gospels suggest that the apostles were faultless? Had St. Francis no failings which were concealed by his disciples? Was not John Wesley proud and masterful? Toplady wrote "Rock of Ages," but no one wishes to read his controversial work. Samuel Rutherford was consumed with the passion of Christ, but one may not boast of his charity. There are flaws in the marble, some of

them painfully conspicuous. Even the saints demand our charity.

On the other hand let us console ourselves that there are not many thoroughly wicked persons. Perhaps we have suffered at some one's hands and spoken strongly against him, but after our indignation has died down we would frankly acknowledge that there was much goodness in him. We may have censured some one for an evil deed, and next day have repented because of something kindly that he had done. If history affords few perfect saints it also does not contain many desperate sinners. Against St. John there is Alexander Borgia, against Elizabeth of Hungary there is Messalina; but those are rare extremes. Neither flawless goodness nor unredeemed wickedness is common; but it is more easy to find John than Judas.

As regards the mass of people they are neither angels nor devils. The representative man has his excellencies and his deficiencies side by side; his character alternates between light and shadow. He is capable of strong affection and vindictive hatred; he can rise to magnanimity, and he can condescend to pettiness. It depends how he is

taken and how he is taking himself. To one person he is attractive, and to another he is repulsive. This is very much the condition of us all when you leave out Judas and John; we are neither black nor white, but just half and between in our spiritual character; we are "whitey-brown."

When we finally abandon the black and white theory we are apt to despair, not only of passing judgment on our fellow men, which perhaps might be an advantage, but of making any moral distinction, which would be a great disadvantage. But what are we to think? The figures are so contradictory that a balance cannot be struck. The wind blows from so many quarters that you cannot call it either East or West. The vessel tacks so much that one cannot be sure of her direction. Pass the select minority of saints and sinners, and is there really any moral difference between one man and another? Is there any ground for the clear-cut distinction made by Christ Himself? Are we divided into classes at all in this life, is there likely to be any separation in the life to come? Does character elude and defy judgment?

Certainly if one went by the evidence of life from the highway he would require not two compartments in which to arrange his fellow men, but a hundred, and he would be inclined to change his specimens from one compartment to another daily. And yet is not the soul of every man a moral unity ? Are we not bound to believe that if we only had the means a man's character could be summed up ? Must not every one's life yield a final result ? Occasionally the real character is revealed with startling suddenness, as when a flash of lightning illuminates the darkness, and we see a landscape with ghastly clearness. The darkness falls again, but the landscape remains. People may live together in the closest intimacy—as, for instance, in marriage—and yet never know one another. Some day, however, the inner self is declared, and the person stands forth as he is and as he is going to be.

We live together years and years,
And leave unsounded still
Each other's springs of hopes and fears,
Each other's depths of will.

We live together day by day,
And some chance look or tone
Lights up with instantaneous ray
An inner world, unknown.

When that happens we discover, beneath casual faults or casual virtues, the permanent trend of character. One person is loathing badness, although sometimes he is mastered by temptation, and he is loving goodness although often he fails in its attainment. Another person secretly loves what is wrong, although at times he does what is right, and seldom shows badly, although all the time his heart is bad. Life upon the surface is a contradiction because opposite currents meet, and there is a confusion of the waters; but the tide is either flowing or ebbing, and God judges not by the achievement of life, but by its tendency. It is not what a man says, nor what a man does, nor even what he is but what he desires to be, and what with his poor effort he is trying to be, which decides his moral standing. Behind words lie deeds, behind deeds qualities, behind qualities intention, and the distinction between one man and another is the innermost ambition, and the chosen attitude of the soul. The final judgment lies with God who knows all things, and who alone knows us, and God judges by the heart.

The judgment of God is full of comfort if there be in us an honest purpose of goodness. It is

not easy to vindicate ourselves to men, nor even to our own conscience, for the power of the world in which we live, and the power of sin in our own hearts, are so strong that we are constantly baffled in our struggle, after the best. If one should say to us, "This is what you ought to have done and you did not do it," alas! that is true. What is the good of saying in reply, we tried? What value to men or to ourselves are our tryings? They are just another word for our failings. "This is what you ought not to have done and you did it," alas! that is also true. We did resist, but we were beaten, and our very effort seems to be only another name for our sin. "What do you care for goodness?" the world says; "you, who cannot keep your temper, who are so self-willed in your actions; you, who are haunted with such unholy thoughts; you, who are so governed by the love of money?" What can a man do but plead guilty? It seems wanton audacity for him to speak of righteousness; and yet, after righteousness he is hungering and thirsting. Why, then, does he not do righteously? Wonderful insight; but could you expect the world to say anything else? Unanswerable logic; and yet the man knows that he

is better than the world judges him, or he dares to judge himself, and so does another. God pierces to the root of all, and understands the human conflict; God believes in the man who from the midst of this present strife and defeat lifts up his hands with even a dumb prayer to the heavenly places. Our judgment is on high, and it shall remain when the decisions of lower courts have been forgotten. We fell; God only knew how we resisted. We failed; God only knows how we attempted. "Now the labourer's task is o'er" is a noble funeral hymn, and this is its most heartening verse:—

> There the tears of earth are dried,
> There its hidden things are clear,
> There the work of life is tried,
> By a juster judge than here.

And the finest lines which Faber wrote are these:—

> There is no place where earth's sorrows
> Are more felt than up in heaven;
> There is no place where earth's failings
> Have such kindly judgment given.

This basis of judgment is not only merciful; it is also righteous, because our success may be

fortune, our intention is fact. If a man does his best to swim to the wrecked vessel with a life-line, and is thrown insensible upon the shore, who will have the heart to judge him because he has failed? Your cheap moralist talks of facts, and no doubt this is a fact that he is lying there like a helpless and useless seaweed. There are other facts which are worth mentioning; as, for instance, that he made a brave attempt, and that he only failed because the surf was too strong. We are apt to ignore such facts in our moral judgments, but they are not forgotten when God is judge. With God the effort is counted as the act, for in the spiritual world it is only a question of time, when the struggler will succeed. What one desires to be he shall be before set of sun, and the soldier who has fought bravely to the end in spite of his reverses shall be glorified. Our failures may one day count higher than our successes, and our gracious thoughts which were choked in utterance be of higher value than our finished words, when God sits on the judgment seat and weighs in His infallible scales, not only the patent facts of life which men have praised, but the spiritual imaginations of the heart which we never realized.

. . . All the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the man's account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount.

Thoughts hardly to be packed,
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through languages and escaped;
All I could never be,
All men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

XV

THE IMMANENCE OF GOD

"If a man love Me he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make Our abode with him."—*St. John* xiv. 23.

THE question of Judas, not Iscariot, and the answer of Jesus reminds us that there are two ideas of the relation of God to His creatures, and therefore two ideas of His manifestation. According to one, which was the message of John Baptist and of the prophets before Jesus, which is a perfectly true message, and requires always to be preached, God is to be imagined outside and above this world. He is our creator, by whose will we have been brought into being, our governor by whose righteousness we are tried, and our preserver by whose mercy we are kept. He is almighty and awful, inaccessible and unknown—a distant God,

Far withdrawn upon the hills of space.

This is the transcendence of God and the idea

reached its climax when Deism reduced God to the chief mechanic who has made the universe like a watch and sees it go, and when Art represented the Almighty as an old and majestic person holding the globe in his hand. According to Jesus and those who have entered most perfectly into His mind, God lives inside this state of things and is revealed within the soul of man. We have not to go to the heights to find Him nor descend into depths; we have not to turn to the right hand nor to the left. Behold, He is a presence throughout nature and His dwelling-place is the obedient soul. Within He speaks to us and we can speak to Him. In a human sanctuary we can meet with Him and He with us:

> Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit
> With spirit can meet;
> Closer is He than breathing, and nearer
> Than hands and feet.

This is the immanence of God, and this truth since the days of Jesus has never been more perfectly grasped than by the mystics before the Reformation, and our own Society of Friends. Nor has it ever been more beautifully and convincingly expressed than in the pages of Tauler's

Theologia Germanica to which Luther owed so much in his day, and our best Broad Churchmen like Kingsley and Maurice in our own day.

While God within was the religion of our Master and He taught that it would be fulfilled to His disciples by the coming of the Comforter no one will seriously contend that it has been the conscious and working faith of the Church. For one Christian who believes in God within, there are ninety-nine who believe in God without. And why? For two reasons, and the first is historical. The Church has not passed beyond the transcendence to the immanence of God because her thoughts have up to this time been largely formed by a powerful theologian who lived in the fourth century, and whose hand is still upon her mind. When one mentions the name of St. Augustine people listen with respect because they understand that he was the chief of the Christian fathers, and with indifference because they know nothing about him except that he had a saintly mother, and was converted through Monica's prayers. They do not realize that this African theologian has had more to do with the ordinary Christian's con-

ception of God, and his practical feeling towards God, than all the religious books which stand on priority lists at the circulating libraries, or which are used as books of devotion from day to day. It is however a fact that just as the average Christian largely takes his ideas about Satan and the fall from Milton's *Paradise Lost* so he has learned his view of God from St. Augustine, and although he may never have read a word of that austere thinker's books he is echoing his thoughts every day in his own prayers and his modest creed. Certainly St. Augustine knew God at first hand, and it was a real God whom he declared. After all it is one's personal experience which gives the colour to his thought and work, and just as the agony of Michael Angelo's strenuous soul passed into his pictures, especially into his *Last Judgment*, so the moral tragedy of this thinker's early life tinged all his writings. He had been a pronounced sinner, and he grounded his theology on sin; he conceived of God as a judge full of righteous wrath and man as a morally helpless being who could not even choose the good. Salvation was therefore from beginning to end the work of God, in

which we could have no co-operating share, and grace was distributed according to His absolute good pleasure. God was most high beyond our reach unless He stooped to us, and man was most low beyond any hope unless God chose to have mercy. We were not sons who had gone astray but who still carried in our soul the dim image of God, and had a claim upon His goodness; we were alien mendicants who stood at His gate and waited till alms were thrown to us.

The other reason why the Church has so seldom grasped the immanence of God is not historical and personal, but natural and moral. There is a certain economy in truth, and the Church as well as the individual must rise from one level to another as the soul is able to breathe the rarer atmosphere. John Baptist came first according to the wisdom of God, and his doctrine of repentance was the preparation for the evangel of Jesus. It was necessary to quicken the conscience before men could rightly imagine God; it was necessary to have a clean heart before there could be a dwelling-place within man for God. Between man and God there could be no com-

munion while the divine law was despised and broken. Keeping the commandments must always be the condition of keeping communion. It was a good thing therefore for the decadent Roman Empire and a corrupt human society that St. Augustine was the ruling theologian. The debauched and callous conscience of that age must be shocked by the terror of judgment, and whenever a man is sinning boldly and has no fear of the divine righteousness it is wholesome that he should learn to think of God upon a throne high and lifted up, and of himself as a miserable and undeserving sinner. As Judaism preceded Christianity and the God of Sinai became the God of Calvary, so in the order of human experience we must first believe in the righteousness of God before we believe in His love, and we must have His commandments written upon our consciences before He can come through the door into our hearts.

With all respect to St. Augustine it must be allowed that his was not the final idea of God, and even in those early days a Greek father had entered wonderfully into the mind of Jesus and was teaching Christianity not more powerfully,

but more perfectly, than the imperious Latin. In Clement of Alexandria, who lived nearly two centuries before Augustine, you have the instance of a man who is not read by the people at large, but who through his influence on a number of minds has indirectly been changing the thought of our day, as when the warmth of summer succeeds the chill quickening air of spring. Clement held that not a few individuals but a race was reconciled to God by the life and death of Jesus; that our present existence was not a probation of which none could see the end, but an education for us all; that God was not a divine emperor in a far off Rome, but one in whom we lived and moved and had our being. Beneath the masterful hand of St. Augustine the profound and spiritual thought of this Greek was for the time crushed, and at last the Roman Church, or at least Pope Benedict IV, removed Clement's name from the calendar of saints. But wisdom is justified of her children, and as Jesus followed the Baptist so the theology of Clement in the order of religious experience and of thought must supersede the theology of St. Augustine. We are living in this more genial day and are

under the dispensation of the Holy Ghost. There are many in the Church, and more outside the Church, who regard the doctrine of the Holy Ghost as little else than a speculative dogma of theology or a pretty conceit of the mystics. What it really means is the spiritual presence of God throughout all matter, all thought, all life, and especially in the souls of men. With this presence the conception of God is crowned and completed. For God is first to be thought of as the source of all things, the Eternal Father, and then as the active power that creates everything, the Eternal Son, and lastly as the life which pervades the universe—one Holy Trinity, All-wise, Almighty and All-loving.

Within the space of this generation Christianity has been shifting her basis from the Latin to the Greek conception of God with excellent results for ourselves and for our children. The immanence of God puts a new face upon religion, making our relation to God at once more reasonable and more loveable. If God be outside of us, then our moral sense is unreliable as an instrument of duty and of knowledge. We have no right to think of conscience itself

As God's most intimate presence in the soul
And His most perfect image in the world.

The Eternal is absolutely beyond our reach, and our reason is worthless for the study of truth. We can neither test nor verify divine revelation, but must accept whatever has the sanction of the miraculous or the authority of the Church. God is then simply a governor, administering this world with its load of sin and sorrow, its innumerable lives charged with hope or despair, from a distance and from a throne—with justice but without sympathy. If God be outside, Christ is a messenger who comes from the unseen, accomplishes a work of expiation, reconciles God to the world and returns again to His place. We are creatures whom God has made, whom He can use as He pleases ; we are debtors whom He may retain or lose at His sovereign pleasure. Judgment becomes a distant event in unknown circumstances, while Heaven and Hell are simply places. All that follows if there be no Holy Ghost and no spiritual presence of God in the human soul.

If, on the other hand, God pervades all things by His spirit, and lives especially in the hearts

of men, then another aspect is given to every relation of the soul to God. Our religious faculty responds to God as the eye to light. No priest is then needed to mediate between the soul and God, and to hold for us the keys of God's Kingdom. Every faithful soul can have direct communion with God, none interfering, and none being able to forbid. God becomes a Father doing the best He can for all His children both in this world and in that which is to come. It is now man who has to be reconciled to God, not God to man. It is God who seeks man as he wanders away from the Divine Presence, not man who is seeking a far off and hidden God. Theology rests not on Adam now, but on Christ, not on man's depravity but on Christ's Incarnation, not on the Church but on the Holy Ghost. Hell becomes that state of mind from which God is shut out, and Heaven is that purity where He can make His home. Nature is no longer a strange and hostile environment, redeemed by incursions of the supernatural but the vesture of the Eternal. And prayer becomes less and less a petition for a change in circumstances, and more and more the desire for conformity to the Divine will.

Never surely has religion been made more real and effectual, more persuasive and inspiring, than in this description of Jesus. Our Heavenly Father dwelling with His Son in every heart which has kept the great commandment and has been cleansed by love, is the Gospel of the Holy Ghost.

XVI

REASONABLENESS THE TOUCHSTONE OF TRUTH

"I beseech you by the gentleness [or reasonableness] of Christ."—2 *Cor.* x. 1.

GENTLENESS is in itself so beautiful a word, and would form so excellent a text, that one hesitates to exchange it for any other term, but gentleness is not quite what St. Paul intended in this appeal. The word which is translated gentleness has only come to assume that shade of meaning by a fortunate usage, and first of all conveys something more profound. It enshrines one of the most characteristic ideas of Greek thought, which might with advantage be acclimatized in our own thinking. The root is a word which means to be like, and so by an easy transition to be seemly, and our noun therefore has the sense of what is reasonable, or reasonableness. This conception was not Jewish, for the Jews were not a con-

spicuously reasonable people, but it was of the essence of the Greek mind. The Greek believed that there was a certain standard of fitness which it might not be easy to define, but which was quite recognizable, and by which everything should be judged. It was not enough that any way of speaking had a certain authority, or that any line of action had the popular suffrages, the Greek referred it to his permanent and independent standard—was it according to reason? Both thought and deed had to be estimated, not by the force behind them, or the number of people in their favour, but by their conformity to reason, for surely the supreme end of life, as Bishop Wilson, so dear to Matthew Arnold, used to say, is "to make reason and the will of God prevail."

Just as the Jew believed—to make this principle of reasonableness plainer—that there was such a rule in the universe as perfect and unchangeable righteousness, by which all actions are to be tried—a righteousness which does not vary with the fashions and moods of any generation, which can neither be manipulated by any school of morals, nor disestablished by a popular vote of any kind, any more than you can change the

sun in the heavens by new theories of light—so did the Greek hold that there was perfect and unchangeable truth by which all thinking was to be tried. There must be an ideal, distant yet distinct, in every sphere of human knowledge—a standard of beauty, by which we pronounce the Apollo Belvidere or the Venus de Medici perfect, a standard of sound by which we judge the notes of music, a standard of quantity by which we are certain the whole is greater than its part. You cannot call the head of a satyr lovely; you cannot mistake discord for harmony; you cannot imagine a place where two and two make five, unless you happen to be insane. And so must there not be some rule which will be to our common ways of speaking and thinking what gold coinage is to paper money, a standard of judgment, and a goal of attainment? So far as we think like that we think truly; and what we may say of ourselves, or others may say of us, does not matter. The world of thought is not a chaos where truth and falsehood are local and provisional terms, and where it matters nothing whether a man talks sense or nonsense so long as he and his circle are satisfied. There is, as Plato would put *it*, "a

law of things," and you always trifle with law at your risk.

There is not one of us but pays homage to what we call the fitness of things. We feel about some action or speech, this may be very taking but it is not seemly, and we know that although this kind of thing may pass for the time, it would never do if life were constructed on such lines. Or we feel again, this may not catch the ear of groundlings, but the world would be a very harmonious sphere if this were the fashion of it. Above all party cries and empty forms and sudden crazes and hereditary prejudices, sounds the majestic voice of the higher reason like the boom of the cathedral bell in Giotto's Campanile, above the confused noise of the carnival in the street below. But whose voice is this, with its note of eternity? Is it not that of God Himself, who is the supreme reason as He is the supreme righteousness, from whom to deflect is falsehood, to whom to conform is truth? What is becoming is divine, what is divine is becoming. Amid considerable confusion in the moral world, some lines do emerge to prove an unseen intellectual order, and one may fairly

cling to the belief that our minds are not flung like vessels without compass upon a restless sea of opinion, but that there is some Pharos of absolute truth,

> A mark of everlasting light
> Above the howling senses' ebb and flow.

Reason remains the law of the spiritual universe, as Hooker has it in one of the noblest passages either of theology or literature: "Her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in Heaven and earth do her homage—the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men, and creatures of what condition so ever, though each in different sort, yet all with uniform consent admiring her as the mother of all their peace and joy."

If one ask how can men with their limitations recognize what is true, we answer in exactly the same fashion as we recognize what is right. We have a faculty which reflects the perfect standard of righteousness, just as the clocks in our houses, more or less correctly, repeat the standard time. Conscience is perpetually passing judgment on the moral character of actions, and

in the main we obey her voice. Reason is a similar faculty which estimates the truth of things, and is the echo of the eternal mind, and reason is ever condemning or approving ideas on the ground of their being true or false. We hear this voice also, and sometimes obey it, but we are apt to forget that one is as much bound to repudiate an idea because it is untrue as to refuse to do an action because it is wrong. No doubt our reason is often dark, and requires to be educated, just as our conscience is faulty and requires to be refined. If our clocks are neglected they may go too fast or too slow, but it still remains that the majority of clocks are attempting to be at one o'clock when the gun fires. Reason may be biased by some error, theological, or social, or national, and the light that is in us be darkened, but still reason in the long run does assert herself, and is for all practical purposes the replica of the eternal law. "It is," as the Greek tragedian taught us, "no child of to-day's or yesterday's birth, but hath been no man knoweth how long since."

When one suggests that reason is the arbiter of truth, he does not undervalue two other sources

of authority. Reason does not supersede that revelation of the character and will of God which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. According to the belief of the Christian Church, the Eternal has communed with certain persons, as, for instance, the Hebrew prophets or the holy apostles whose souls were susceptible and whose ears God had opened. They received such clear and living ideas of truth that their words have become an inspiration and a guide to their fellow-men. If the principle of inspiration is apt to be belittled in the present day, it is worthy of remembrance that eminent men of science have traced their most luminous thoughts to a spring beyond themselves, and beyond all men. Helmholz in his delightful autobiographical sketch declares that good ideas often came actually in the morning on waking, and another has this note—"The law of induction, discovered January 23rd, 1835, at 7 a.m., before rising." They were conscious reinforcements from the source of all truth. One can see the development of a sixth sense in the race, and may well believe that with every age an increasing number of persons will hear the voice of God as did Abraham and Isaiah, St.

Paul and St. John. It is one thing, however, to believe that God is truth, and has specially declared Himself through a receptive race, and another to accept any book, without question, as an infallible standard of truth. It is evident that such scripture could only come to us through a human medium, and nothing can guarantee the veracity of the medium except the inherent reasonableness of his message, and of that the human reason as the reflection of the Divine must be the judge.

Nor does reason belittle the authority of the Church, for it would be huge self-conceit on the part of any generation to ignore the stored wisdom of the past, and most unscientific not to avail ourselves of the work that has already been done. Intellectual culture is acquired by the study of the best that has been taught and written, and spiritual culture cannot afford to fling away the riches of an accumulated heritage. The Church is the treasure house of spiritual discoveries, experiences, endeavours, victories.

> The souls of now two thousand years
> Have laid up here their toils and fears,
> And all the agonies of their pain.

The voice of the saints speaking in councils, from the Council of Jerusalem unto the last which has been guided by the Spirit of God, or speaking through the creeds from that first profession of faith in Jesus with which the Apostolic Church began her theology, to her last deliverance on doctrine, is very impressive and informing. But one remembers here again that the Church is made up of fallible men, and that the Church has often erred. Reason must therefore sift her utterances also, and separate not merely what is true from what is false, but very often what is local and temporary from what is universal and eternal. And so the final appeal must be made, and as a matter of fact is made, to the voice of reason.

One of course does not forget that the authority of this high court of reason is constantly impugned from opposite quarters. Cardinal Newman was never weary of depreciating reason as a guide in religion, and at last, in what seemed to many intellectual despair, placed his own under the control of the Roman Church, and Protestantism, forgetful of the main principle of the Reformation, has more than once in sheer panic lost faith in reason. It is well to be reminding

ourselves that God Himself planted this faculty within our nature, and that it is illuminated by His own Spirit. That it is the one faculty whose function is the study of truth, and that it is to this faculty that God makes His appeal. His complaint in the Old Testament is that "Israel doth not know, My people doth not consider," and in the New Testament Jesus' appeal is to human experience—"What man of you?" The ideal person of the Old Testament is the wise man, and the beginning of religion in the New Testament is when a man repents and changes his mind. Christianity, of all religions, should be the last to appeal to credulity, and to teach superstition; its appeal should be ever to a man's judgment, and its hope to establish it in truth. The business of reason is to sift what is real from what is unreal, to crush and wash the quartz, to gather the particles of pure gold, and to offer the precious metal for the acceptance of faith. Reason searching the Bible and travelling through the history of the Church leaves the chaff and keeps the corn —taking Abraham's splendid faith, leaving the intended sacrifice of Isaac; taking the pity of God over Nineveh, and leaving the fanaticism of

Jonah; taking the spirituality of the Psalms, and leaving their fierce invectives; taking St. Paul's love for Christ and leaving his rabbinical arguments; taking the patient study of the fathers, and leaving their fantastic allegories; taking the Institutes of John Calvin, and leaving his persecution of Servetus; taking John Knox's courage, but leaving his frequent roughness; taking the Puritans' earnestness, but leaving their narrowness. And we know what to take by its radiant reasonableness, because nothing can be more becoming, more winning, more satisfying, and more like God. This we ought to believe is a reasonable world wherein the reason planted in the human mind will harmonize with the reason which speaks from without, and therefore we need neither deny nor suspect this high faculty which God has set as an inner light within the soul. As one of the most spiritual philosophical thinkers of our day, the present Master of Balliol, has written—"Reason lies nearer to us than any external authority, and no outward evidence can be sufficient to overturn its testimony. . . . It is only because the content of a revelation is implicitly rational

that it can possess any self-evidencing power or exert any moral influence on the human spirit."

It remains, however, after we have fully appreciated the faculty of reason, and have vindicated its proper function in the sphere of religion, that we must join with one heart in thanking God for the revelation of Jesus Christ. As there can be no conflict between reason and faith, since they have different functions, so there can be nothing but harmony between reason and Christ, because Christ is the answer and fulfilment of reason. What the light is to the eye, Christ is to human reason. He reveals that perfect image of God and of man, and that perfect rule of life and character after which the human mind by many sages and saints has been earnestly seeking, and which in the words and work of Christ it recognizes and welcomes. If human reason be the dim shadow of the Divine reason, then Christ, who is the Logos of God, by virtue of His deity, is also the supreme reason of man, by virtue of His humanity, and in Christ reason, Divine and human, meet and blend. Christ becomes therefore to us the standard of thought in religion, not by the imposition of God, but by

the constitution of our nature. He only thinks rightly who thinks with Christ. He who commits his mind as a docile disciple to the Spirit of Christ is delivered from the bondage of error and brought into the liberty of truth, and the highest point of religious certitude is reached when the Christ within the Bible speaks to a man and is answered by the Christ within the man. Apart from Christ,

> The intellectual power through words and things
> Went sounding on its dim and perilous way.

Since the true Light has shined, it is our duty and our salvation to follow Him till every thought be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and at last we stand where the day has broken and the shadows have fled away.

XVII

CONTEMPORARY FAITH

"We trust in the living God."—1 *Tim.* iv. 10.

THIS is the faith of the Christian Church and also of the human soul. But it is apt to be denied from two opposite quarters, and first by those who are not believers. They have reasoned that as the microscope reveals no Deity in matter, and the telescope does not find Him in the heavens that He is nowhere; or, they have been so puzzled by the anomalies and contradictions of life that they have not been able to accept the idea of any moral controlling will. For one reason or another a number of quite honest people have concluded that we cannot get behind the phenomena of the universe, and that if we did we should not find that intelligent mind and personal will which represents the idea of God. They cannot trust in the living God, because there is no convincing proof of His existence. With this attitude of

intellectual agnosticism we have nothing to do on this occasion.

The second person who denies the idea of the living God is an earnest believer, and his denial is not a theory but a practice. He believes firmly that the universe has had its creator, the human race their ruler, and the soul her Saviour, but his faith is couched in the past tense. God lived once without doubt—hearing prayer with evident response; doing wonders in the eyes of all men; sending forth prophets from His presence; judging nations with rewards and punishments—a God whose going could be seen by all the nations and who was more real to the saints than the sun above their heads. But, and here faith passes unconsciously into unbelief, the same person does not believe with unrestricted mind in the living God of the present, guiding nations now as surely as He guided Israel in the days of the prophets, doing wonders now as in the days of the apostles, speaking to men now as He spoke when the books of the Bible were being formed, visible unto those who have eyes to see, and audible to those who have ears to hear. His presence has to be found in

the dead centuries ; His character is a fresco on the walls of an ancient temple, His fellowship lives in the experience of Jewish saints. This faith looks back to see God, it does not look round ; it trusts in God who once came forth from His secret place, but has withdrawn Himself. Many a devout person recoils from the thought that God still works as in the former days. If he desires to know what God's mind is he betakes himself to the voices of Hebrew writers ; if he desires to know what God does he travels back to Hebrew history. God in that past is clear and active, in this present He is silent and ineffective. And this seems a reverent and devout faith. Is it not really an insidious and enfeebling form of religious unbelief ?

Can God be living if He has ceased to speak and to act ? Can one conceive a God who is indifferent ? If he be God in the robust sense in which the Hebrew prophets believed when they made their triumphant comparison between the living God of Israel, and the idols of the heathen, or in the more intimate sense in which Jesus spoke of His Heavenly Father, then His spirit is still guiding men as He guided the apostles and

prophets, and He is still moving down the paths of present day history as the ark led the Children of Israel. God has not withdrawn Himself from nature, which is sustained by Him as surely in this late age as when the world was young. Neither has God abandoned the government of men, and the world of human souls. It is thinkable, though less than reasonable, to deny God altogether; it is neither thinkable nor reasonable to affirm a living God up to the year 100 A.D. and then to imagine Him henceforward handless and speechless.

When one says that he does not deny that there have been certain periods of unique spiritual recaptivity when elect souls came into the secret of God, and became the medium of radiant revelation. It has indeed been a feature of history that the human mind has at times been lifted, as mountains rise from the plains, and has come near to the skies, and this law of elevation runs through other departments than religion. There was a century before Christ at Athens when Art, literature, philosophy, and politics touched their zenith, and to-day we travel back to see the shapes of beauty and to read the books

of that high summer. Never again have we had architecture like that of the Acropolis or statuary like that of Pheidias; no dramatist has risen to be compared with Sophocles, no statesman rivals Pericles. But Art and Letters still live, and the great men of that day have had their successors. The Jewish people had a genius for religion as the Greeks had for Art, and the flower of their race became the ambassadors of God, bringing to their high office qualities which in the case say of Isaiah and St. John have never been equalled. Their writings, and above all the words of that Chief Prophet in whom this line culminated, will ever remain an inspiration for religion. And that is why those writings constitute the Holy Scriptures. Outside that line however one must believe that God spoke in the ancient time by such prophets as Plato and Confucius, according to their measure, and that in later days God has spoken by St. Augustine and Clement, by Luther and Calvin, by A'Kempis and John Bunyan. There are reasons why the canon of scripture should not be opened, but one need not be afraid to say that there are books within the Bible which are less spiritual, and have done less

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for the human soul, than some which are without. Every one will agree that Pascal is a more profound and spiritual teacher than the author of Ecclesiastes, and that if he had to choose for the purpose of his soul between Esther and the *Pilgrim's Progress* he would prefer the Puritan prophet. This does not mean that the Book of Esther served no end, but it does mean, and this is the point, that God still speaks and that we ought to trust in a living God.

Again one remembers that there was a brief three years when God wrought visibly in human life as He never did before, and never has done since. The public life of Jesus was a supreme exhibition of the power of God, beside which the creation of the sun and moon is not to be mentioned. There has only been one Christ, nor can we imagine another like unto Him, who indeed in His solitary greatness is the only begotten and well beloved Son of God. But it must be added that God wrought by the hands of Moses and of Samuel before Christ came, and that God has been working in the ages since Christ left, and that, always excepting Christ's own life, the things done outside the Bible record have

been more wonderful than the things contained therein. It is amazing that people should dwell so much upon the life of the Jewish nation, and should see so little of God in the life of their own people. Why should preachers be haranguing Christian congregations on the petty skirmishes of Jewish tribes while any moral instruction to be derived from them could be more appropriately gathered from the Civil War of England, when acute religious problems were faced and thought out. When one desires an illustration of judgment to prove the moral government of God he can find it, not only in the flames of Sodom and Gomorrah, or in the decay of the Jewish state, but in the decadence of Rome, in the humiliation of Spain, in the horrors of the French Revolution. No man may belittle the Hebrew prophets as leaders of men and judges of righteousness, but they are not the only men whom God has called. If Elijah held the pass for his people, Knox bore himself bravely for Scotland; Isaiah was not more to Jerusalem than Luther has been to the German nation, and no one would contend that John the Baptist accomplished more for Judah than John Wesley for England. One may hazard

the guess that Xavier has had more souls for his reward than that gracious prophet Hosea, and that Spurgeon turned more to God by his preaching than St. Paul in all his mission journeys. God's hand has not been shortened that it could not save, His ear has not been heavy that it could not hear during all the ages. Still from the sacred presence comes the prophet, still in the midst of life God works.

It is open to say that it would have been much easier to find God in the ancient times. But one does not gather from history that people had a keener sense of God in those Bible days. Isaiah's generation believed in the God who brought their fathers out of Egypt and who shepherded the patriarchs; but they did not believe in the God of Isaiah. If they had, he need not have written his first chapter, and he would not have fallen a victim to the persecution of unrighteousness. Contemporaries no more accepted the prophetship of Isaiah than Bunyan's fellow-countrymen acknowledged his message. The generation of Jesus believed firmly in God, but He was not the Father from whom Jesus had come. When Jesus claimed to speak for God, they considered

Him a blasphemer, and when they heard the voice of God in their synagogues they denied it. If any one wished to know God he must listen to Moses and the prophets. For now, after having been in their own day misunderstood and put to death, the prophets are accepted as the servants of God. God's operations were put back several centuries so that it was piety to hold that God was speaking in the fourth century before Christ, but blasphemy that Jesus represented God as surely as Isaiah.

Are we not also, as much as the Pharisees, hindered by our timidity in recognizing God outside Bible history, and by our want of spiritual discernment in contemporary life. The past seems full of poetry ; the present is dreary prose. We accept the judgments of the Jews, we ignore the judgments of our own nation. We praise God for the deliverances He vouchsafed to Israel, we are unmoved by those which He has wrought for England. We celebrate a Jewish Providence lavishly, we hesitate to identify an English Providence, and hence spring two evils which I wish to mention in conclusion.

One is the divorce between faith and politics,

which was not the habit of the best men of Israel, nor in the great days of English history but, all men being witness, is a calamity of our time. Not only does no one refer to God in arguing the affairs of the State, but, what is far more important, it is not the custom to think of God. Men do not believe that the laws of moral government are running in the land and should govern both our home and foreign affairs. We refer our successes and our reverses to every cause except to the hand of God who blesses a nation doing righteously, and afflicts a people when they do wrong. Ought not the final appeal be neither to the mind of Parliament nor to the votes of the elector, but to the law of righteousness? Is not the power which will reward obedience to that law and punish every affront God Himself? Has not the Church herself failed in her faith when she clings tenaciously to the creeds of the fourth century or of the seventeenth, and does not recognize that the spirit of God which guided our fathers guides also their children into clearer light and deeper truth.

After the same fashion we not only lose instruction as citizens of the commonwealth but

we also lose comfort in our daily life, because we are enslaved by this form of respectable unbelief. We believe that God heard some far distant Psalmist, and that He guided Abraham in all his ways; we doubt whether He is as certainly hearing and guiding us. We are sure He spoke to Abraham, we are quite as sure He does not speak to us. As if He were not the same God and we have not as much need of His help. This is not reverence, it is irreverence; this is not modesty, it is ignorance. Are we not entitled to believe that there is no blessing granted to a saint within the range of Bible history which is not ready for the saint of to-day. What relief from care, what deliverance from fear, what consolation in sorrow, what light in darkness, would come to our soul if we in this year of our Lord could only muster up enough courage to believe that we are as dear to God as any Hebrew patriarch or prophet, and that there is no work of God recorded in Holy Scripture which He will not abundantly perform for the humblest person who puts his trust in the living God.

XVIII

POSITIVE RELIGION

"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded."—2 *Tim.* i. 12.

WHEN no one has any fixed opinion, the entrance of a man with full blooded convictions is like a bracing wind from the moors reviving a sickly atmosphere, and one reads the letters of St. Paul and hears him declare his creed with respectful envy. He had been a conscientious anti-Christian and now he was as pronounced a Christian. He did not dwell in the low country where a man feels his way through the fog, but he stood on the heights where one lives in the eye of the sun. His attitude was not that of modern culture—that Christianity has some admirable ideas, and so also had Paganism, that no religion can be absolutely right, and that the best plan for a thoughtful man is to appreciate every religion and limit himself to none. St. Paul was convinced in the marrow of his bones that all the good that could be found in his former faith and

in every other was gathered up with a thousandfold of increase in the religion of Christ. If a man were a Christian he had obtained the chief good, and the more thorough a Christian he was the fuller would be his possession. The Apostle was sure of God, and sure of immortality because he was sure of Christ. He knew whom he believed and was persuaded of salvation, and he remains to all ages the classical type of religious certitude.

Such stalwarts of faith stand out in bold relief from the multitude of people nowadays who may not be distinctly irreligious, nor wilfully sceptical, but who neither know what they believe nor where they are. This timid uncertainty is largely the re-action from a strident and imperious dogmatism. If we are afraid to be positive about anything, our fathers had no hesitation in being positive about everything. They included in their creed not only the facts but also the theories of Christianity, which is the extravagance of faith. They insisted not only on what was eternal, as for instance the atoning sacrifice of Christ, but also on what was temporal, speculations about its principle. Truth was argued out to its jots and tittles and a burden was

laid upon the reason which it could not bear. Instead of gathering the tendrils of faith round the person of Christ our fathers stretched them to embrace the most distant and doubtful dogmas. As the capacity for faith is limited, if you decentralize its forces and spread them over too wide an area they may be attacked in detail and cut off from the centre. Dogma has its own justification, for it is simply reasoned truth, and one is surely bound to think out religion as carefully as the Fiscal Policy, it is the product of theological science and the result of the process should be preserved. But when dogma is transferred from the province of reason to that of faith, and virtually replaces Christ, it becomes a tyrant of the soul. And the nemesis of dogmatism is scepticism.

The pendulum has swung to the other extreme, and the vice of unlicensed affirmation has given place to the habit of unlimited legation. Actual Atheism, as the author of *Natural Religion* says, is "speculatively monstrous—a mere speculative crotchet or a grave moral disease." But one wonders as he talks with his acquaintances or looks at people in church how many have a

working creed which they could vindicate, which they have tested and hold with all their mind. What strikes one to-day is not what people believe but what they do not believe. One feels that their attitude is not positive but negative. They are always letting you know what they do not hold about the Bible or doctrine or the future life. Preachers are themselves affected by this atmosphere, so that they come to state truth in terms of worldly wisdom. The Personal God of the saints becomes the eternal something-or-other; He who was dead and is alive for evermore is reduced into the Christ idea; the miracles, it is suggested, should not be taken as fairy tales after the suggestive discoveries of Dr. Charcot of Paris in hypnotism; and immortality is saved from incredibility by the perpetually hopeful papers of the Psychical Society. One fears that in some quarters the pulpit has lost nerve and has forgotten the evidence of history, that whenever Christianity has been most convinced she has been most victorious, and whenever she has been most apologetic she has been most futile, and also that it is the schools within Christianity which assert and construct and not the

schools which are critical and eclectic which have chiefly affected their generation. Our fathers may have been too sure about everything; it would be an immense gain if some of us were absolutely sure about anything.

No doubt it is a good thing that if the past has added its own imaginations to truth the plaster should be stripped off the walls, and the original beauty should be revealed. But it would be a disaster if the intellect of the Church should be so occupied in recasting the form of the Scriptures as to have no strength left for declaring the Gospel contained in the Scriptures. It is well enough to repair a house, but one does not want to be left houseless. Is it not time that the strength of the ministry were withdrawn from criticism and given to evangelism? We have had enough of recanting, we long for some confessing. If criticism has instructed us in the historical evolution of the Bible the question still remains, Do we believe that in this book God has revealed Himself to the human soul? It is right to cleanse ourselves from Jewish conceptions of Christ's sacrifice, but are we certain that by His Cross and Passion Christ has redeemed mankind from the captivity

of sin? Granted that we no longer assign a literal meaning to the imagery of the Apocalypse are we holding fast to personal immortality beyond the grave?

We are justified in disbelieving things which have not been proved, but only if we believe the things which have been proved. For a modern to refuse to believe something simply because his father did believe it, or to be willing to believe anything if it be not in the Bible, seems to be a principle of thought to-day, and it is really very simple-minded. Is it not the case that any book which denies is supposed to be honest and thoughtful, and any book which affirms to be prejudiced and obscurantist? The people who doubt everything which the Church of Christ has held most firmly for nineteen centuries give themselves amusing airs of superiority, and the people who hold the heart of the Christian creed are liable to be regarded with intellectual pity. As a matter of fact there is no more ability in denying than in affirming, nor any greater liberality in doubting than in believing. If there be a bigotry of orthodoxy which in the past has been intolerant there is also a bigotry of heterodoxy which

in the present is most insolent. There is nothing to choose between an over believer and an under believer in the matter of breadth. The extreme right and the extreme left meet on a common basis of intolerance, and also, as France has illustrated more than once, of persecution. The man who holds a crude view of the atonement is not one whit more unreasonable in discussion than his neighbour who does not believe in the atonement at all. The determined defender of the Athanasian Creed is not more narrow than a certain type of Unitarian. When unbelief arises from intellectual pride it rivals the arrogance of dogmatism. As Lacordaire says, it considers "every limit as an insult to its capacity," and "presumes to treat with God as between equal and equal. Such a man no longer studies for the love of truth, but against it. His knowledge is but a stubborn duel between himself and God."

It is pathetic to notice how negation realizes its homeliness, and tries to create some modest substitute for Christianity. People whose intellect has been obliged to lay aside the Gospels turn with ingenuous confidence to Mrs. Eddy, and women who have not been able to believe the

apostles used to speak a few years ago with a beautiful far away look of Madame Blavatsky's illuminating message. It comes with a shock of surprise that the author of *Ecce Homo* after giving us so engaging a likeness of Christ should in *Natural Religion* invite us to worship the moon and the stars, and that distinguished men of science should turn from the doctors of the Christian Church to spiritualistic charlatans rapping on tables with their toes. Had Maskelyne and Cook instead of following the business of ingenious conjurers set up a religion one is haunted with the idea that they would have swept the field of unbelief and gathered in by the thousand that kind of person whose delicate culture and remorseless reason have not been able to accept Christianity. What does this grotesque procession of make-believe religions mean? Is it not that faith alone satisfies and denial affords no rest?

Christianity has no quarrel with any of her ghostly rivals, but rather considers them to be prayers for something better. We assume that every man desires to believe, and in offering Christ for the satisfaction of his soul we lay down

three grounds of religious certainty. And the first is authority, or let us say the Bible. Christianity is bound up with Christ, and we are dependent upon our knowledge of Him in the first instance upon the Gospels and Epistles. Within the sacred writings is the only history of Christ—how He lived and died and rose again. When one believes he does so on the ground that this record is probably true, and it is reassuring to remember in this age of unflinching criticism that as Professor Rendel Harris says, "Every new discovery pushes back the date of St. John's Gospel." The second ground of certainty is testimony, or the voice of the Church. Whether one be a believer or not it is very impressive that a vast body of people from the first century to the twentieth have trusted in Christ and have declared with one consent that He has been the Saviour of their souls. If we accept the word of a traveller about the land he has visited or of a man of science on the work he has done, why should we not give the same weight to religious testimony? Why do we make so much of evidence in every department of life except religion, and why do many prefer the evidence of non-religious persons

on faith to those who are its chief witnesses? It does not follow that because Mr. Darwin knew about worms that he was an authority on the soul, or because Mr. Huxley was a most lucid teacher of natural science that he had any right to say the last word on miracles. Even in religion one must be scientific, and depend not upon amateurs but upon experts. Are we not more likely to arrive at the truth in this high affair of faith by listening to the saints than to persons whose admirable studies have been among the lower animals?

The final ground, however, of certainty must be experience. There are only two provinces of absolutely sure knowledge; one is pure mathematics and the other is the experience of the soul. When we say "The whole is greater than the part" we are stating an axiom which is embedded in our constitutions, and in order to contradict it you would have to reconstitute the mind, and for that matter the universe. This axiom belongs to the nature of things, and the Almighty Himself could not make the part greater than the whole. When St. Paul says "I know" in religion he is falling back upon his spiritual consciousness.

First, he realized Christ in Heaven at the right hand of God, next he observed Christ doing great wonders in his own life, and finally he found Christ in his own soul. He was now united to the Lord after so close a fashion that for him to live was Christ, and his life was hid with Christ in God. None could shake his faith, for he carried Christ within him, none could separate him from the Lord, for he was with Christ in the heavenly places. If you object that his conciousness might be wrong you have come to the end of things. If a sane man like St. Paul is not a witness to his most profound experience, and if he is deceived about the thing he knows best, then human experience is worthless, and we have no certainty that we even exist. If Paul had a right to say " I " and we allow him to be a conscious being, then he had a right to say " I know whom I have believed " and we ought to accept the certainty of such experience.

When a man has the evidence of experience he is better off than those who had the privilege of sight, for sight did not convert every person in the days of Christ's ministry, and the senses are often most deceptive. The witness is now in the

man himself, and he is as sure of Christ as of his own existence. The Bible does not now prove Christ to him but Christ proves the Bible, and his complaint of St. John's Gospel is not that it relates things too hard for faith, but that it has not told him one thousandth part of the grace of Christ. The probability of the Bible on which he first rested, and the probability of the Church on which he next rested, becomes the certainty of personal experience. He is not concerned about the date of the Gospels ; they have become contemporary documents. The drama of Christ's passion and resurrection have been repeated within his soul, and the voice of the Church fills with greater majesty the simpler notes of his own faith.

Christianity is for every man first a venture and then an experience, and it is as positive as science. Science rests originally on faith, and so does Christianity. There is first the scientific imagination, and then the scientific experiment till the hypothesis becomes a law. After the same fashion Christ invites men to follow Him and promises everlasting life. There is a presumption that Christ is a Saviour, and this presumption

becomes a probability, with the Gospels in a man's hands and the history of the Church before his eyes. Why should a man not obey the invitation which Christ gave and fulfil the condition of obedience which He laid down. Let him suppose for the time that this Saviour, who according to testimony has saved so many, is living, and let him believe in Him for the time at least, as so many have believed even unto death. It is the most supreme experiment, but there are reasons for making it, and also strong hope of its success. If Christ never spake, and never lived, the man will not have lost anything, for the words assigned to Christ have been worth the hearing, and the life assigned to Christ is the best for living. And if He still stretches out His hands, and still receives sinful men, and still leads them in the way everlasting, it will be the most successful venture of the soul, for eye hath not seen nor ear heard the reward which waits Christ's disciples in this life, and in that which is to come.

> Whoso takes his cross and follows Christ
> Will pardon me for that I leave untold
> When in the fleckered dawning he shall spy
> The glitterance of Christ.

XIX

THE REASONABLENESS OF PRAYER

> "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him?"—*Matt.* vii. 11.

IT is a property of our Master's words that they are contemporary with all ages, and this argument for prayer applies to our own time and our own way of thinking. What hindered a man from praying aright in our Lord's day was a want of sincerity—that Pharisaic temper of mind which had turned prayer into a vain repetition. What hinders a man from praying at all to-day is a perversion of sincerity, that frame of mind which refuses to believe in anything not physical. Prayer according to this modern standpoint was a pardonable peculiarity of the period when men had not learned the uniformity of nature, and when one miracle more did not matter. Some still pray because they are indifferent to science; some because they under-

stand science; but many find the words freezing on their lips because of the surrounding temperature. They are hag-ridden, not by the laws of nature, but by the theories of science; they are brow-beaten by those who may know the facts of science, but who have not correlated them with the facts of religion. They are the victims, not of science, but of sciolism. And long before our day Jesus taught His disciples to appeal from this tyranny, to the supreme reason, or the nature of things.

Prayer has been defined in many ways—as communion with God, as aspiration after the highest things, as doing our daily duty, but Mr. Stopford Brooks was right when he insisted that prayer in its plainest meaning is a petition addressed to God. Take the element of petition out of prayer, and prayer may be a wholesome exercise of the soul or a spiritual energy of the life, but it ceases to be what we mean by prayer. Prayer with Jesus was straightforward and unhesitating petition, asking God to do something, and believing that He would do it. And when Jesus laid the duty of petition upon His disciples He went on to assert the reasonable-

ness of a man asking and of God answering, by that argument from man to God which he loved to use and which is thoroughly scientific. If a child in an earthly home were hungry he would turn by an instinct to his parents, and if he asked bread would the father give the child a stone? Impossible, because it would be contrary to nature, and if you could imagine a state of affairs where the offspring, whether birds in a nest or infants in a home, receive stones instead of food from their parents, you would have a topsy-turvy world. Jesus, therefore, argues along the line of reason, that if an earthly parent, although from his limitations often foolish and sometimes evil, yet does the best in his power for his children, will not the Almighty and All-wise Love of which human love is only the shadow, do better still for His great family? And, therefore, our Master teaches that men ought everywhere to pray without fear, and without doubt.

When we ask whether it is reasonable to pray, and not merely a fond superstition, it surely counts for something that prayer is an instinct. From Socrates who commanded his disciples to begin every work with the gods, since the gods are the

masters of affairs, to the little child which learns the name of God by its mother's knee, one finds the soul turn to God as a flower stretches itself in the direction of light. In the straits of life, however indifferent a man may have grown to prayer, or however keenly he may have argued against prayer, upon a petition he will fall back. Nature in an agony is never atheist, and many have cried

> God be pitiful, who never said
> God be praised.

What does it mean that a bird has wings but that there is air in which to fly, or that men are moved to pray in an orderly universe, but that there is a God to answer them? Must not religion be taken account of in the theory of things quite as much as the verified law of gravitation, and the more speculative principle of evolution, and is not prayer the core of religion? Both Canon Liddon and Sabatier say in exactly the same words, "Prayer is religion in act"; and Sabatier asserts that the mere worship of nature is not properly religion because it cuts a man off from prayer. "It leaves him and God," says that brilliant Frenchman, "in mutual remote-

ness, with no intimate commerce, no interior dialogue, no interchange of thought, no action of God in man, no return of man to God." Of course the compass of prayer may range from the sacred intercourse between Christ and His Father to the despairing wail of the sceptic, "O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul." But it remains the pulse-beat of religion, and until religion be argued out of human consciousness, prayer must be justified. If there be a God, and if there be a soul, then, as George Herbert has it, prayer is—

> God's breath in man, returning to his birth.

It is for experience to decide whether prayer be of practical use, and it is always better to depend upon expert witnesses—to hear Darwin rather than a gardener on the variation of plants; Lord Kelvin rather than a telegraphist on the properties of electricity; and the saints rather than amateur critics of religion upon prayer. One turns to Abraham who interceded for Sodom, to Jacob who wrestled with the angel until the day broke, to Moses who in the darkness of Sinai obtained God's mercy for his nation, to Elijah who opened and sealed the heavens

by prayer, and to the unknown poets who gave us the matchless liturgy of the Psalms. One appeals in later days to St. Paul, whose letters break off at great moments into petition, to St. John who in the vision of prayer beheld the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to the Chief Saint of God who spent whole nights in prayer upon the lonely mountain side. One remembers in modern times the multitude of believing men who have wrought marvels by prayer; how the more Martin Luther had to do, the more he prayed; how Cromwell on his deathbed interceded for God's cause and God's people, in the finest prayer ever offered by a patriot; how it was written of "the Saints of the Covenant" in Scotland that they lived "praying and preaching," and that they died "praying and fighting." Time would fail to tell how the saints of the Church and the champions of God's cause have prayed; but in our time we should remember what was said by Lord Salisbury of Mr. Gladstone, that he was "a great Christian," and that brilliant Statesman drew his strength from the springs of prayer. What possessed those men that they undertook no work till they

had first met with God, that they turned unto Him in every hour of defeat, that they carried to His feet the trophies of their victories? Was all this pure waste of time, and sheer delusion of soul, and were they—the men who have known most about religion—simply deceived when they testify of religion's chief act? Is this credible?

Granted, then, that men should pray, and that God will answer. What is given? Well, the answer may come, not in granting anything nor in taking anything away, but in a new state of mind. It is right to ask for such things as we need, and that we be saved from the things which we fear; but the chief of all prayers, in which all others are included, is this—"Not my will, but Thine be done." Francis Bacon laid down this principle in science, "Nature can only be controlled by being obeyed," and Bishop Gore points out that "the philosophy of prayer lies in the same law of correspondence." As children in the House of God we have to fall into its spirit; to learn the lesson of obedience and to guard ourselves against selfish purposes. When our will is the will of God, the great end of prayer has been achieved, and everything which terrifies

and frets passes away. "Do not pray," said one of the most holy men I know to his devoted servant, "that I be cured of this disease, for it is incurable, and therefore we may not pray against the Will of God. Pray that through the pain of the body my soul may be sanctified." So the heart is brought into harmony with the mind of God, and His peace which passeth all understanding possesses our souls. When this happens something is certainly done, and quite as certainly the order of the universe has not been broken but confirmed.

Again definite things may be given which are not visible. St. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not removed; but he received grace to turn it to good purpose, and was able to glory in his affliction. This principle we can verify without turning to the saints and apostles. We pray to be delivered from some humiliating disease; instead thereof God teaches us patience, and we learn the meaning of the Italian saying, "To endure is also to do." We desire quick success in life and we have to wait, but in the discipline our character ripens, and character is more than wealth. We pray that some one's life be spared

with which our own is interwoven ; the loved one is taken, but our heart is also lifted into the heavenly places. We pray for light on some problem, and it is slow of coming ; but in the darkness we are taught to trust. It is said that the inhabitants of a Greek island besought the gods for a gift of gold, and the gods told them to dig their land over and they would find priceless treasure. They did so with persevering toil, and found no gold, but their vines yielded the sweetest grapes in Greece.

Have we, then, no ground to pray for tangible things ? For the healing of the sick, for deliverance from danger, for the welfare of our friends, for our daily bread ? Are we to be bludgeoned into silence when flesh and blood are bursting into a petition by an exposition of the unchangeable order of nature or by gratuitous information, that when we pray for a shower of rain we are asking for as great a miracle " as the levelling of Monte Rosa to a plain " ? Are we to be politely laughed out of faith by clever writers making game of the " sturdy beggar " type of prayer ? Certainly the history of devotion affords some remarkably sturdy beggars who were not ashamed

to beat at the door of God's palace and who refused to leave till they got an answer. One may cite, for instance, what Professor James in his *Varieties of Religious Experience* calls prayer of the "crassest petitional order." Müller of Bristol kept five large orphanages, besides circulating much religious literature, sending out several hundred missionaries, and teaching a hundred and twenty thousand children in his schools, at a total cost of £1,500,000, and he never had a subscription list or made an appeal for money. It is an absolute fact that he simply laid everything before God in prayer, and he never wanted for the support of his orphans. He is a witness to the success of prayer, acting in the physical sphere; and I like to associate the experience of that good man with the evidence of Sir Oliver Lodge, who says, "Religious people think it scientific not to pray in the sense of simple petition. . . . If saints feel it so they are doubtless right, but so far as ordinary science has anything to say to the contrary a more child-like attitude might turn out truer and more in accordance with the total scheme. . . . Who are we who dogmatize too positively regarding law?

. . . Prayer we have been told is a mighty engine of achievement, but we have ceased to believe it. Why should we be so incredulous? Even in medicine, for instance, it is not really absurd to suggest that drugs and no prayer may be almost as foolish as prayer and no drugs."

We come here to a province of insoluble mystery—the How—but it is possible to delimitate the frontier between reason and superstition. When God helps us He does not reverse the laws of nature, nor does he act without agents. God may answer a prayer for rain by guiding the rulers to build storage works and to irrigate the country: or a prayer against pestilence by moving the people to cleanse their homes and live more temperate lives. If we pray that our country should have the victory in a just cause, the answer would come not through a legion of angels joining our troops, but through the mind of the general being inspired and the hearts of his men being strengthened. When people in danger of shipwreck cry to God, it is not likely that the sea will be reduced to a calm, but it is likely that succour will come through the capacity of the captain. If it be God's will to grant the recovery of a sick person, it

will be accomplished through the skill of a physician. In what particular are the laws of nature violated in such beneficent operations? Is anything more in keeping with human consciousness than action upon the mind from an unseen source, and is not the material the servant of the spiritual? Do not, therefore, be ashamed to pray, and do not be afraid to ask anything you need in submission to the will of God, for you are not only fulfilling the instinct of your own nature, but you are acting according to that highest view of the universe which places an active intelligence over all its operations. You appeal from the vast machinery of the universe to the will which directs it; from the forces which we cannot control unto Him round Whose throne they stand as mighty angels. You appeal from the things which change and shift, from the mysteries of nature, and the perplexities of life, to the mind, to the heart, and to the hand of your Father in Heaven.

XX

THE DIVINE CHARACTER OF THE STATE

"The powers that be are ordained of God."—*Rom.* xiii. 1.

THIS deliverance of St. Paul commands attention both by its substance and its occasion. The apostle declares that the authority of the State does not rest either upon the usurpation of the strong man, who holds the government by force, or upon a social contract in which the citizens, like a body of shareholders, elect their board of directors. St. Paul is persuaded that it comes from God, Who calls the magistrate to his office, as He calls an apostle, and that the magistrate is in as true a sense an officer of God. There are three ethical institutions in society, the family, the State and the Church, and if the family and the Church have any divinity so also has the State.

It follows, therefore, that to resist the government of the State is to resist the government of God; that when the officers of the State collect taxes,

they are acting as the ministers of God, and that every one should pay tribute, not only that he may escape the wrath of the magistrates, but that he may fulfil his own conscience. Whether there may be occasions when a citizen is released from this obedience by the act of the State or by the compulsion of his conscience is another question, but it is evident that such circumstances must be considered a rare exception, and be very anxiously weighed. As a rule, for the citizen to resist the State is the same in moral value as a child being disobedient to its parents, or a Christian being disloyal to the Church. The State is a sphere of moral government whose sanctions are derived from God Himself.

As there is no direct connection between the preceding part of the letter and this passage the apostle evidently was giving what he judged a necessary and permanent piece of advice. And one has not to go far for a reason. The Jews were never easily governed, and when a Jew became a Christian there was a special danger that the new wine of the Kingdom of God would go to his head, and that he would be carried away with wrong ideas about the freedom of the Messianic

religion. It would not be easy for him to respect the imperial government, nor would he be quick to see the necessity of civil obedience. Religion is a fermenting element, and the spirit of God stirring in a man's soul might excite him in unexpected quarters of his life. Nothing could be more unfortunate than if the disciples of Jesus, who Himself was so respectful towards all authority, should become revolutionary, and the misfortune would be doubled if Christianity were associated with anarchy in the capital of the world. The Christian faith was calculated to reform, not to destroy the State, and there could not have been a greater catastrophe in that day than a dissolution of the bonds of government. It is not by rebellion against stated authority that Christianity works, it is by regenerating the individual, and establishing a true ethical order. St. Paul in insisting upon the divine ordinances of the State is setting his face against a heady individualism, and a destructive nihilism. His words had a special application in that day when old things were passing away, and all things becoming new; and they have a seasonable application in our day, when ancient ideas of reverence have ceased and

authority is being reduced to a minimum both in Church and State.

If, however, we are to believe in the Divine authority of the State we must attach some definite meaning to the word, and I do not think I can quote a wiser statement than that of Dr. Newman Smyth in his *Christian Ethics*: "The authority of the State is derived immediately from the moral value of the social relation which it organizes. . . . If these primal relations of humanity have moral worth, and are to be brought to the highest possible realization, then the State is invested with their ethical authority, and is itself an ethical end." What is meant is that there are social relations existing before the State, and that those relations cannot be superseded by the State. It should, rather, give effect to them and become the most comprehensive form of human relationship. The will of the State is a combination of the will of the individual citizens. As Professor Seth puts it in his study of *Ethical Principles*: "The visible sovereign is the representative of this invisible sovereign"; or, as Locke says, "The sovereign power is the public person vested with the power of the law, and so is to be considered as

the image of the commonwealth." To disobey the State is therefore to disobey one's own larger self, and one's own better self—the self in which the ideals of conscience and of reason are incarnate.

If the authority of the State be the fulfilment of the ethical instinct of the citizens, then that authority falls to the ground in two circumstances. If the State ceases to be a public person, and becomes a private person, that is if the ruler instead of living for the benefit of the State and in order to fulfil its noblest destiny lives for himself, and to aggrandize private interests, then it is plain that he is no longer ordained of God. He is not now the depository of the general will, which returns again to the citizen and has to be incarnate in some other person. This was the justification of the French Revolution. Or again, the will of the people may arise so that their conscience be no longer represented by the forms of government. In that case government will have to be recast, and to be brought into conformity with the advancing will of the people. There must be a continual re-adjustment between the moral sense of the people and its embodiment in the State. As an old fellow student and friend has written, "The uncrowned and

spiritual sovereign of the universe is the nation itself," and Milton has nobly conceived the State "as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth or stature of an honest man."

It has been a misfortune that the State has not had its due place in our mind, and it would be a good thing if every person called to exercise the rights of citizenship were to make a careful study of the "Republic" of Plato, which still remains the greatest treatise on the State. Plato's idea was that "the good man is the good citizen of the good state," and that inner excellence is not sufficient without an outer excellence, or in other words that you cannot separate ethics from politics. No man can live apart from the State, no one ought to wish to live a private life. According to the Greeks the State was the ethical environment of the individual, and Professor McCunn has the same idea in his admirable book on the *Ethics of Citizenship*. Hence in ancient times one finds the subordination of the individual to the State, and the profound respect for the function of the State. Just as the individual Christian will have a dwarfed and selfish character and will not rise to the stature of Christ, if he be not a member of the

great Christian commonwealth called the Church ; and just as a man or woman will not as a rule have the same richness, or fulness of sympathy, who has not shared in the experiences of family life, so the citizen who is not a living member of the State will come short of ethical completeness. This great idea of the ancients is, I think, confirmed in our own observation by the paltriness of the citizen who is indifferent to public affairs, and to whom the State is nothing but a " night-watchman " to protect his property and his person, and also by the magnanimity of those persons who give themselves to the service of the State with all their heart and mind as to the service of God.

People would not be afraid of this high doctrine of the State if they realized the object of its existence. We must cleanse ourselves from the idea that the State exists simply to rule, and in some cases to coerce. While of course the State restrains the vagaries of self-will in political affairs as the Church does in theological affairs, and the family in personal affairs, the great object of the State is not to destroy but to develop the personality of its citizens. The ideal of the State is so to regulate corporate life that every member of the common-

wealth shall come to his full height, and have his just opportunity of living. It is a fallacy to imagine a conflict between individualism and collectivism, as if the individual could fulfil his destiny apart from his fellows, or as if the association of men together meant the obliteration of the individual. Just as the individual forgets himself in devotion to the State so will he find himself again, and just as the State life is strong so will the life of the individual be also strong. The duty of the State to the individual is first to protect him from all wrong, and secondly to give him the opportunity for all good. On the one hand, to use concrete illustrations, the State represses crime, and on the other the State promotes education. On the one hand it defends the country, and on the other secures its well-being. That is a happy State which maintains a just balance between those two functions, justice and benevolence.

Had we higher ideas of the State two advantages would follow. The citizen would make more conscience of his citizenship, for few things are more disheartening than the different attitude of obligation which the ordinary man has to his family and to the State. He is keenly sensitive

about the honour of his home, he endeavours to promote its welfare, he will sink himself in its interest. Towards the State he is lukewarm and neutral. He does not concern himself about its affairs or its character unless his own welfare is involved. He is not proud of its glory unless he obtains some direct prosperity for himself. The State does not represent to him anything more inspiring than the police or sanitation. It is simply an administration of convenience. No doubt his imagination may catch fire when the State assumes an imperial form, but even then his allegiance is very utilitarian. When the State assumes a municipal form, it does not seem to some of us that the average citizen has ever come within a thousand miles of believing that the government of a city is a divine ordinance, or that the local state is the nurse of character, and a sphere where citizens can rise to their stature of moral perfection.

Higher ideas of the State would also do much to raise the character of its servants. Were it believed that the servants of the State are ministers of God, then they would be as carefully chosen as the officers of the Church, and they would feel as

great a responsibility for the discharge of their duties. It may be necessary that politics in our country should be conducted along party lines, but it is nothing less than a sin that any party should be put into competition with the State, and that an advantage to a party should be snatched to the detriment of the State. Men who do such things are traitors to the commonwealth and should be marked for condemnation. The public servant should be indifferent to his own interest, and to the interest of any section of the people. His eye should be ever on the general good, and his devotion be to the nation. When such a man arises, no empty gabbler nor foolish trifler, no self-opinionative crank nor greedy schemer, but a man whose words are wise and whose work is thorough, who loves the people and seeks their highest good, let that man be honoured and promoted. For such men are the servants of the Highest, and by their work the State becomes the Kingdom of God.

XXI

IMPERIAL PATRIOTISM

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."—*Ps.* cxxxvii. 5, 6.

IT has been urged that while our faith revived virtues which were languishing unto death under the former civilization, and called into existence others hitherto unknown, Christianity has been a cruel stepmother to one of the noblest qualities of Paganism. Chastity and pity have come to their full height under the inspiration of Christ, humility and self-sacrifice have been vindicated by His example; but patriotism has starved. One anticipates the evidence for this criticism. Jesus' own aloofness from the burning questions of His day, the cosmopolitan spirit of His chief apostle, the comprehensive charter of the new kingdom, the trend of the Sermon on the Mount, with its enforcement of meekness

and patience, and the spiritual aims of our religion, have all seemed inconsistent with that ancient devotion, without scruple and without reserve, to the cause of one's country. This suspicion has been fed by the attitude of the largest Christian community, which maintains itself as a separate kingdom in every State, and whose members give precedence to its ecclesiastical ruler before the sovereign of their country. And also by an extreme school of Protestants whose superior and ultra-refined spirituality does not allow its disciples to take part in spiritual affairs. Pronounced Christians, it is supposed, ought to be like those large-minded people who are so much concerned with their neighbours' affairs that they are indifferent to their own homes, and are so entirely citizens of the world that they are citizens of no place in particular. One is haunted with the feeling that in proportion as people become spiritual they cease to be national, and the more they think of the world which is to come, the less they are concerned about the welfare of the world which is, and especially about that portion which God has given them for a habitation. The

charge of lukewarmness towards the State has not been made without some reason, and every disciple of Jesus ought to settle with his conscience the duty of patriotism.

Certainly it may be frankly admitted that if Christianity impoverishes this high virtue which has existed from the dawn of nations, and which lent an austere glory to the Pagan communities, our religion has come short of perfection. For one thing it would throw two of our most powerful instincts into bitter conflict—our loyalty to the body of Christ into which we have been baptized, and our loyalty to the community into which we have been born. Can there be a more bitter calamity in the sphere of conscience than when an honest man has to choose between his Christianity and his citizenship. It is an intolerable dilemma because it is an artificial situation. What is the Church in any country but the nation acting in a religious capacity? And what is the State but the nation acting in a civil capacity. Many noble minds indeed have imagined an ideal condition of affairs, when there shall be no longer a limited body of religious people in a land—the remnant of the Hebrew prophet;

but Church and State shall be co-terminous, two moods of the same national soul. This Utopia is still in the future, but meanwhile let us lay it to heart that if the Church be of God, so also is the State, and that if any one imagines that religion has loosed him from those civic duties which were a law of love to the Pagan conscience, he really holds that religion is in conflict with the order of God. It is not upon this foundation of disloyalty to the State that a man is likely to rise to the perfection of manhood. If one is careless of his family we do not judge it any compensation for this disloyalty that he professes to have replaced his home by his city. And if a man denies that larger sphere within which our separate habitations have found their shelter, it is vain for him to boast that he has only thrown off his native land for the moment, that he may receive her again into his heart, together with the ends of the earth, her friends and her foes together. Nothing will remove the impression that he is the victim of philanthropic cant, and that this pretentious claim to humanity arises not from the breadth, but from the narrowness of his soul. If a man love

not his own land which he has seen with all his heart, then is it likely that he will love any other land which he has not seen, and to which he owes no obligation

Upon the face of it, however, one can hardly believe that Christianity could take the side of disloyalty when he remembers its lineage. Did not our faith spring from the womb of Judaism, and is not Hebrew thought the red corpuscles in our blood? Has history produced any patriot so unchanging in his remembrance, so heroic in his devotion, so proud in his spirit as a Jew? How unparalleled his persecutions! How invincible his constancy! How unflinching his faith in God! How unbounded his charity to his brethren! Without a land and with a ruined capital, this people remain the most cohesive and distinctive nation on the face of the earth. Is it credible that this sap should bear the fruit of antinationalism in any, or that the patriotism of the prophets should be cancelled by the cosmopolitanism of the apostles? Is the eloquence of Hebrew statesmen picturing the perfect state, and the pathos of Hebrew poets lamenting their exile from Jerusalem, to have

no effect on the Christian consciousness? Has the Hebrew conception of the State no place in Christianity, and have the Old Testament Scriptures been cancelled?

As a matter of fact the most intensely Christian nations have been the most national—witness the Irish and the Scots, two extremes of rigorous and unbending faith. And did not England produce in the seventeenth century a school of Christians who as much as any Hebrew regarded their land as the heritage of God, and strove to make their commonwealth a theocracy? People imperfectly acquainted with the Puritans, or misjudging them by some of their shambling modern representatives, may criticize Puritanism for many faults, but they ought not to accuse it of want of patriotism. Cromwell, that king of men, was not afraid to shed blood to make England free within; he was willing to shed blood to make England strong without. Never—making allowance for the time—were the forces of England more efficient by land and sea than when Cromwell commanded the army, and Blake the fleet; never was England more quick to avenge the oppressed or to aid righteousness.

In the Puritan the virile patriotism of the Jews lived and was glorified.

What Jesus did for patriotism was not to abrogate it, which would have been sorry work for one sprung from the loins of the royal house of Judah, or to depreciate it and set His Church against the State in every century, but to cleanse it from impurities, and give it a nobler direction. With His spiritual ideals, Jesus could not abide the cynical worldliness of the Sadducean aristocracy, who were content with the degradation of the nation so long as their Temple taxes were left untouched; with His broad vision He could only protest against the bitter fanaticism of the Pharisees, whose teaching tended to make a Jew every man's enemy. From first to last He loved His nation with that discriminating passion which made the prophets both Israel's defenders and Israel's judges. He did not rejoice to see the Roman soldiers in His country; but He sorrowed far more to see the common people despised. He did not undervalue freedom; but He considered it was not possible till the rulers of the people had overcome their own sins. What Jesus desired was not a hopeless revolt against

Rome, which would only mean disaster; what He longed for was a revival of faith and morals. A degenerate nation could never be free, a regenerate nation could never be enslaved.

Jesus rendered two services to patriotism, and one was to inspire it with a noble mind. It can never be enough for a Christian citizen that each census gives a larger population than the last, that the savings banks are congested with money, that the volume of trade is swollen, that the rate of wages is rising, that the arms of the country have prevailed over foreign foes, or that we have annexed another province. For he knows that a land may be populous, and rich, and strong, and feared, whose people are miserable, and whose dependencies are spoiled. He has been taught that a nation only is blessed when its homes are full of peace and its power is used for righteousness. Patriotism must labour for the good of all and the injury of none, to build up a nation in faith towards God, and love towards man. Jesus warned His contemporaries that if they persisted in their unreasoning fanaticism, the end would be a bath of blood; and can any one doubt that if the Jews had listened to His

voice they would have possessed their own land to-day, and their glory would have had no shadow? The tears of Jesus over Jerusalem were the pledge and measure of His patriotism.

Jesus has also taught us by His charity to believe that men of different views may have an equally good intention, and that there may be politics which will rise above parties. If it be the case that the government of a country is best carried on by parties, then every Christian should lay it to heart that no party has ever existed without including men of undeniable patriotism, and without rendering service to the commonwealth. If indeed any party should claim to have the monopoly of honesty it is self-condemned: it is the party not of nationalism, but of Pharisaism. Hampden may be a more familiar name in our annals, but Lord Falkland was as sincere a patriot of his country. One can easily mention statesmen of our day who have taken opposite sides in our controversy, but one would find it difficult to assign the palm of integrity. Nothing can be more unworthy than to impute bad motives to fellow citizens who attempt the good of the commonwealth

by other means than ours, nothing more ungrateful than to belittle the labour of any who serve the State with a true heart.

One, however, infers from the spirit of Christianity that the Church as represented by her ministers ought not to meddle with the machinery of politics. History proves that whenever a Church has identified herself with any side she has done her own interests a grievous injury, and flung away a golden opportunity. Does not every one now see that it was a mistake for the Church of England to cast in her lot with the Stuarts, and for the Church of Scotland to take up arms for the same ill-fated house. Both Churches repented this unfortunate policy when they were humbled under Cromwell's hand. Will the Churches lay the lesson of the past to heart, and be wise not after but before the event? The division of the political world is justified by experience, but if it came to pass that the Christian Church should be assigned to parties so that a Conformist must be a Conservative and a Nonconformist a Radical, then our children will alone be able to estimate the calamity.

It is not for the Church of Christ to play upon

the ambition of parties, offering and receiving bribes which are not less binding because they do not happen to be pecuniary, or to agitate the state for the passing of laws. But surely it is within her commission to feed the spirit of nationality in the hearts of English people, teaching them that as God trained the Jews apart, that they might give His law to the world, so has He placed us in our island home that we may dispense justice to distant nations. Why should we not believe that if a Hebrew prophet had a right to call Israel God's people, this Britain of ours is also the nation of God. And why should not our prophets rebuke our people for their sins and comfort them in their sorrows with the authority of Amos and of Isaiah? This brave note has been heard in the voices of the author of *Piers Ploughman*, and Wycliffe, that reformer before the Reformation, and Latimer with his shrewd English speech, and Sir Thomas More, that fine public soul, and Cromwell, our uncrowned king, as well as Charles Kingsley, and Frederick Robertson, and Thomas Carlyle, and John Ruskin of our own time. Such men carried the sorrow of the nation in their hearts,

and told the people plainly their sins; they called upon their countrymen to believe in God, and they dared to imagine great things for England. Why not? If the prophets dwelt with a proud memory on the works which God did in the ancient time, the right arm of the Most High has not been hidden in English history. If God had not been our defence in the sixteenth century there had been no English nation, and if He had not put a heart in us a century ago we should have become a province of France. Our history affords evidence of the faithfulness of God as convincing as any to be found in Hebrew annals, and it is a provincialism of faith to seek for the living God in the forays of the Judges, and not in the battles of the Peninsular war. Pitt and Wellington were more distinguished servants of God than Jephthah and Samson, and if those merciless fighters rendered service to humanity by smiting the decadent Canaanite stock, we served the cause of righteousness in Napoleon's day. What nation in modern times has established so many colonies, explored so many lands, rendered such services to civilization, or set before the world so perfect an example

of liberty? Will not any people which comes under our rule attain, so far as may be possible, to knowledge and prosperity. Unto the Jew it was granted of God to reveal His will; it has been granted to our nation to offer unto the ends of the earth freedom and order. Is it not, therefore, becoming that our children should be taught the names of those notable servants of God—prophets, statesmen, soldiers, travellers, who built up the fabric of the Empire, and also the mighty works wrought by our fathers. Above all, ought not the Church of Christ to hold up before the imagination that high temper of patriotism which places our fatherland before all other nations, and the State above all parties, which seeks for no changes save those which bind all classes together in peace, and which only covets power to use it for the defence of the heritage committed by the Eternal to our charge?

XXII

THE GLORY OF THE CITY

"And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband."—*Rev.* xxi. 2.

WHEN one is in a healthy state of mind he must love the country with its wide distances, its varied colours, its wealth of animal life, its untainted air, its simple living; and he must resent the masterful aggression of the city as it covers the greenery with packed streets of monotonous houses, and replaces the quietness with the weary din of traffic. One almost hates the city for a crueller wrong, and a sadder waste, because of the people it has devoured, who came up healthy, contented, simple-minded, and grew stunted, restless, bitter, each man pushing his own way, and knowing not his neighbours' names, wearing out his years in grinding toil, or flinging them away in riotous pleasure. The city seems to be like the fabled monster

which lived upon a tribute of young life, because it is ever devouring our best and filling its shrunken veins with the red blood of the country. There are hours in every man's life when he longs to escape from the crowd and turmoil of the city, when he regards its problems with despair.

So far as the country mood moves townsfolk to simplicity, it is not unwholesome, but it must not be carried too far, lest we lose touch with facts. The city is the inevitable result of a law which from the beginning has been gathering men into communities, and making those communities the centres of national life, so that the progress from barbarism to civilization is marked by the increase of the city. Cities may be overgrown and the forcing bed of many social evils; they may also alienate people of simple tastes and homely ways, but the city can neither be obliterated nor reduced. It grows and asserts itself, and to the city runs ever more swiftly the tide of life. Establish a pastoral community with vast stretches of country, and the city will rise and dominate the land, till Melbourne be Victoria, and Pretoria the Transvaal, and San Francisco be California, and Chicago the

middle West. When any tendency is a factor in the development of life, then it must be accepted as a law which may be abused, but which cannot be annulled. The city is as much of God as the country, and has done at least as much for the race.

If the country has been loved by patient silent folk, whom neither poverty nor hardship could drive away, the city has won the passionate devotion of many elect souls. Isaiah's pride in Jerusalem struggled through his shame over her sin; Charles Lamb was never happy away from London, and did not feel himself safe except upon her streets; every nook of Boston and every incident of her history were dear to Oliver Wendell Holmes; Edinburgh was Scott's own romantic town, and St. Paul's love for Tarsus was only exceeded by his ambition to see the capital of the world. As a countryman is satisfied with the flowers in his garden, a field of ripe corn, the sound of running water and the tints of autumn, so the man of the city loves its crowded market places, its ceaseless stream of people, its changing moods of fierce endeavour and sparkling pleasure, even its shadows, its

smoke, its mixed noises, its pungent odours.

Nor is it difficult to understand how the city seizes the imagination of men and makes them her servants. Whatever be the sweet perfections of the country, it is the city which inspires the workers in every department of thought and action, except the highest reaches of religion, where our Lord walks with His apostles in Galilee. Not only do the masters of invention and commerce, the rulers of politics and high affairs, make the city their dwelling place; thither as by an irresistible fascination drift even the poets and artists. Painters should surely be able to resist the witchery of the city and be loyal to the country which feeds their genius, but Blake with his visions must needs live in London where fashion beat upon his closed door, and Millet, who of all French artists has most perfectly represented peasant life, was near to death in Paris. There are poets like Wordsworth whose souls flourish in the silence of the country; there are others like Browning who only come to their height amid the motion of the city. They are quickened in that electrical atmosphere which is charged with new ideas, quick criticism, stirring

ambitions, gigantic schemes, fierce contrasts, where all the comedy and the tragedy of life are placed upon the stage. One returns from the country with wistful regret, charmed and rested, but dull of thought, and disinclined for action. One has no sooner disappeared within the shadow of the smoke, and been caught by the whirl of city life, than the mind awakes, and the passion for work takes possession of the soul. We mourn the sacrifice of bright lives which have been worn out by the exacting demands of the city, the men and women who have died before their time. It is the tragedy of the city. We might also mourn the men who have come to nothing in the country, who have ceased to think and do, and have grown old, like dumb, contented animals. It is the tragedy of the country. After all it is where life is keenest, its calls heaviest, and its rewards most splendid, that as a rule the warp and woof of the richest patterns are woven. St. John the Divine was a countryman reared on the shores of the Galilean lake amid a wealth of flowers and fruit, but when he thought of the life that was to be when the former things had passed away, it

was not a lonely Garden of Eden which opened before his vision, but the New Jerusalem with its streets of gold and its gates of pearl.

Among the various influences which make for the good of the national life, none ought therefore to be more carefully fostered than civic patriotism. How jealous a country town is of its name; with what affectionate memory it cherishes every past glory, and with what minute interest it follows every citizen who goes into the greater world. If one be so minded he may jest at provincial vanity, but that is shallow mockery. It is this local *esprit de corps* which sustains municipal life, invests its offices with dignity, elevates the character of its people, and secures the well-being of the little community. When any town has lost its pride it has begun to decay, and that means so much loss to the empire, for as the spirit of an army depends upon the tone of the regiments, so the life of the empire is fed by the life of the towns. One sometimes fears that the spirit of municipal patriotism does not beat with proportionate strength in the heart of the greater cities, and that in this matter the little towns put them

to shame. If this be so the cities are the losers, and it would be well for their inhabitants to add to their enterprise and intelligence a greater measure of civic pride.

It is not enough, however, to cherish our municipal glory, we must be prepared to take our part in municipal service. One does not admire that citizen whose thoughts are raised above the institutions which have blessed him and the interests of the men who are his neighbours. For any one simply to look after his own affairs, and to have no part in the common life except to pay its taxes and criticise its administration, is disloyalty, both to the place of his dwelling and to the law of Christ. That city is fortunate which has many "public souls," and where all the people share the burden of citizenship. That city is in a perilous state where any large class abstains from local politics, and regards them with contempt. Men of large affairs and cultured leisure may belittle municipal duties and consider it a condescension to take a seat in the local parliament. It is cheap dignity, it is selfish policy. If men without broad views or strenuous ideals have grasped local government, whose

blame was it? Partly no doubt theirs who seized places above their capacity and used their power for private ends, but largely it is also the blame of abler men who stood by careless and contemptuous. If mistakes have been made in the administration of cities by which improvements have been hindered, and sectional interests have been fostered, the disappointment of good hopes must be laid at the door of those who, through social exclusiveness or the dearth of public spirit, refuse to touch the work of the commonwealth with the tip of their fingers.

No honour is too generous for men who with every qualification of intelligence, and every reason to safeguard their leisure, have entered a city council with no other purpose than to make their dwelling-place more like unto the city of God. If the number of such men should fail, local politics would pass into the hands of professional managers, manipulating affairs for their own aggrandisement, and the city would be ruled by those with no qualification except obedience to the political machine. Were that day ever to come, as it has in America, our cities

would be handed over to the government of persons in whose public integrity we had no confidence, and with whom in private life we would refuse to associate.

No apology need be offered to the most distinguished citizen for asking him to take his share in the government of the commonwealth. A city is a self governing state within the empire, in many cases with a larger population than some of our colonies, and interests more important than some foreign nations. It exercises a direct influence upon social life such as the Imperial Parliament might well envy, for a strong man can carry through the local Commons a beneficent measure in a year, while in the national Commons, he might fail after a lifetime. With every year the scope of municipal government widens and the responsibility of municipal rulers increases; with every year the welfare of the country depends less upon the House of Commons and more upon the local council.

There are two kinds of revivals—the spiritual, which deals with the individual, and the social, which regenerates the community. We have

had spiritual revivals in the past, we are now at the beginning of a social revival. A change has come over the religious consciousness, and a man is more anxious about the salvation of others than of himself. The father when he was dying was chiefly concerned about his own soul, the son is anxious about the welfare of his wife and children. If it is going to be well with them he leaves himself without further question in the hands of the eternal love. If one pleads for the building of a church it is hard to raise the money; if he pleads for an open-air fund it comes in readily. Missions are most acceptable to-day when they care for the body as well as the soul, and set themselves to relieve the sufferings of women and children. People have ceased to care about theology, but they are ready to hear the Sermon on the Mount. They are wearying of arguments regarding Christ's person, but they have an open mind to what Christ said we should do with our fellow men.

May the day not have come to us of which Isaiah spake to Jerusalem in the beginning of his prophecy, when he preached his social gospel? May not God have a controversy with us because,

though our theology be correct, and our worship reverent, we have not done our duty by the poor and needy? What if God be calling us, not to build more churches in the cities, but to see to the houses in which His children are living; not to spend more money on organs and choirs, but to relieve the miserable and helpless. Should not the Church of Christ use her influence more directly for social ends: to settle as far as possible the people on the land, that we may have a contented and strong country population; to secure in the cities that every man for whom Christ died shall have his own house where he can live in comfort and decency with his wife and children; to abolish the gross temptations of the city—the public-houses at every corner of the poorest districts, and the scenes in Piccadilly Circus; and to bring it to pass that every man who is willing to do honest work shall have a fair wage. When, according to Isaiah, we relieve the oppressed and judge the fatherless, then, and no sooner, shall the promise be fulfilled, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson they shall be as wool."

It is good that a man build his own home in righteousness, and protect it with peace. He must have regard also to the commonwealth of which he is a part, and by which he has been blessed. It is needful a man care for his own soul and enrich it with good things; he must remember also the multitude at his doors who are labouring and heavy laden. It is not enough so for us to live that at last we shall attain Heaven in another world; we must strive to bring Heaven to the city where we live in this world by filling it with health and gladness, with the knowledge and love of God. According to the words of an English prophet :—

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

XXIII

THE BODILY PRESENCE OF CHRIST

Not discerning the Lord's body."—1 *Cor.* xi. 29.

WHEN the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was celebrated in the Church of Corinth, there was a double presence of the Master, and it was because the Corinthian Christians discerned neither kind that they earned St. Paul's censure, and ate and drank condemnation to themselves. Before our Lord left this world and ascended unto the Father He promised that He would be always with His people. He would depart from sight and be realized by faith; absent in the flesh, He would be present in the Spirit. As the spirit of a great man still breathes in the words he spake, and awakes in every crisis of the nation he made, so, but in a more intimate degree, is Christ with His Church. Wherever two or three are gathered together in His name He is in their midst and gives His benediction of peace. Whenever His evangel is preached He wields His

mystic power and draws men unto Himself. He moves before His disciples in the royal way of the Holy Cross, constraining them to service, to suffering and to death, and amid the innumerable providences of common life He guides and supports the soul. Chiefly, however, is Christ near us in the sacrament of baptism, when parents place their children almost visibly in His hands; and in the Holy Communion, when those whom He has redeemed show forth His undying love. It has been the misfortune of Christian people to differ widely about the doctrine of the Sacrament. It has been their happiness to find that under many forms the Master has revealed Himself to the faith of His disciples. It was because those Corinthians treated this sacred rite as if it were a common supper-table, and did not wish to see the Holy Grail, that they were guilty of profanity and come under a heavy judgment. Not discerning the Lord's body in the bread and wine, they denied the spiritual presence of Christ.

But our Lord was also present in that room after a more visible fashion than with the symbols of His body and blood. While a few rich men enjoyed the meal which preceded the Sacrament in

the early Church, and was called on this occasion, surely as by irony, the love-feast, others sat at the same table poor and starving. They were humble persons whom Christ had called into His Kingdom, or whose souls Christ had made free. One had escaped for a brief hour from bondage to celebrate his spiritual emancipation; another had left his squalid room to realize his heavenly citizenship; a third came with tears undried to confirm his faith in the life of the departed. They had brought neither meat nor drink with them, for they were as poor as Christ had been Himself; they could only huddle themselves together, feeling their very presence an intrusion and their misery an offence, while the eye of some full-fed Christian swept over them with insolent disdain between the passing of the wine-cup. It was amazing blindness. Had their prosperous brethren never heard from the gospel tradition how Christ went to dinner with the rich Pharisee, and received neither oil for His head nor water for His feet? How, on the night of the first Lord's Supper, when no one else would discharge the task, He washed His disciples' feet with His own hands, how He had not where

to lay His head during His life, and at last was laid in a stranger's tomb? One is amazed that no subtle suggestion of Christ touched their minds, that no impulse came to these supercilious Corinthians, moving them to rise and serve their poorer brethren.

One of the most delightful stories of antiquity describes how Ulysses, after his long wanderings and sore toil, returned at length to his own home. He came not as his friends had last seen him, nor as he really was. He wore the appearance of age, and was disguised as a beggar; unknown by friend or foe, he sat in the lowest place and was neglected at his own board. Two only recognized him in spite of every change—his dog, by that instinct of affection which is often surer than reason; the other his nurse, who knew him when she washed his feet and saw the scar which the wild boar had made as Ulysses followed the chase on Mount Parnassus. It was in this fashion Christ came to His own house and to His friends at Corinth. Not as a great and wise man, but dressed in a slave's worn garment, with a gaunt hungry face and the marks of fetters on His body. This was the Christ that crept

timidly into the Upper Room of Corinth. If the rich Corinthians had really loved Him with even the affection of a dog or a servant they would never have been deceived. If they had waited on Him in the person of those poor fellow-Christians, they would have seen His wounds; but in their selfish satisfaction and in their contempt they overlooked and despised the Lord. Without any doubt and apart from any doctrine they had the body and blood of Christ within reach of their hands, and they discerned Him not. So they insulted the body of Christ.

No one can read the Gospels without learning that Christ was not only pleased to wear human flesh but that He identified Himself with the humblest. He was born of a village maiden, and afterwards worked as a carpenter. His first public act was to mingle with sinners in the Jordan, His last to be crucified between two thieves; if a man were cast from the synagogue Christ sought him out, and if any class were ostracised Christ threw in His lot with them. One never links Christ's name with wealth and palaces, it rather suggests the friendless and the miserable. His connexion with the poor was more

than an accidental association, it was a deliberate intention ; it was not that He loved others less, it was because the need of the poor was greater. Christ foresaw two things clearly, the demand of the weary and heavy-laden world, and the devotion that would gather round Himself. So He brought it to pass that the service ready to be given Him should be rendered to the suffering world. When He incarnates Himself afresh in the body of every one who is in straits, and assures us in His most solemn parables that whatever we do to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the sick, and the captive, is done to Him, He endows the unfortunate with an inexhaustible inheritance. By one stroke He makes them the heirs of the deepest gratitude which the human heart has ever known, and secures for them all we would do for Himself. They are now His body, over which the precious ointment has to be poured.

Sacred art loved to depict the Pieta, when the body of Christ, which had been worn out in service, was taken down from the Cross and made ready for burial. St. John, his friend, holds the drooping head, and Mary Magdalene

bends over the weary feet, which once more she washes with her tears, this time not from dust but from blood; while the Virgin looks into the face which for the first time does not respond to her love. That happened once, that happened long ago, that will never happen again, for He who was dead is alive for evermore, with all power in Heaven and in earth. His heavenly body is beyond the reach of the nails and the spear, it is in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as He once was slain. What happens every day is that Christ's earthly body is attacked and wounded, stripped and left by the wayside, bleeding—sometimes in our great cities, where men and women are perishing for lack of bread, or for lack of love; sometimes where Christians are persecuting and hating one another; sometimes in our homes, where we neglect those who need our help, and wound those we ought to heal. Happy is the man who does not pass by nor close his eyes, who has a pitiful heart and a ready hand, and a discernment of Christ. It matters not whether he knows much or professes much; he may be neither priest nor Levite, only a Samaritan, but he has discerned the Lord's body.

Religious literature, as well as religious art, has done its best to embody this truth, not in pictures, but in parables. A sick man comes to a poor woman's cottage, and asks for shelter. She takes him in, although she has very little for herself and her children. She nurses and cares for him, and one morning finds that he is gone. But the room in which he lay is full of light; and she knows that the sick man was Jesus. A little child stands trembling on the edge of a roaring torrent and is afraid to cross, when a good monk takes him on his back and enters the stream. The weight grows heavier and the current stronger, but the brave heart toils on, and when exhausted reaches the other bank. Christopher receives the benediction of the Lord, who dwells in little children. St. Francis meets a leper on the road and gives him alms, and then feeling an excess of pity in his heart turns back and kisses him. A minute later the saint looks across the open plain to see what has become of the unfortunate, but there is no leper anywhere to be seen. Then he knew that he had pitied and kissed his Master. An abbot is asked to redeem a widow's only son from captivity, and

is so moved by her tears that he robs the altar of its silver candlesticks and places them in her hands. Then he goes in the evening to confess what he has done and to ask forgiveness, if so be that he has sinned. As he prays before the altar a light shines round about him, and when he looks up, behold! the candlesticks are standing in their place; but now they are solid gold, and the face of Christ above them is full of tenderness. So they discern the Lord's body.

"Once a Christian," said Lacordaire, "the world did not vanish from my eyes, it rather assumed larger proportions, as I myself did. I began to see therein a noble sufferer needing help. I could imagine nothing comparable to the happiness of ministering to it under the eye of God, with the help of the Cross and the Gospel of Christ!" That is a just and balanced statement of the theory and practice of Christian service. Discover Christ's body in the world around, and you transfigure the world. It is not then so many people to be used, or endured, or criticized, or injured, or studied, or put in statistics; it is so many to be served—from the slow child and the hot-tempered person in your

own house, to the desolate life next door, and the multitude which has lost hope. The body of Christ is not merely in the sacrament on the Holy Table, it is in the hospitals and in the slums; it is in the persons of the poor and the outcasts of the street; it is in the oppressed and in the friendless. In them Christ waits to be ministered unto every day, and our ministry is the measure of our love. The sin of the Church has been the isolation from the poor outside her borders, and the contempt of the poor within her borders. Whatever excuse may be offered, or however difficult the problem may be, it cannot be right that some of Christ's people should be so well housed and others so miserably; that Christ's body in the Sacrament should be in so fair a building and Christ's body in the poor should be in a hovel.

The conscience of the Church is growing tender on this matter, and we are not so comfortable as the rich Corinthians were; but if the Church is to rise to her vocation she must not only have an enlightened conscience but a tender heart. There has always been a danger of separating between Christ and His body, discerning the Lord but

not His body, or discerning the body and not the Lord. No love has ever touched the human heart with so fine a passion as the devotion to the crucified and the risen Christ. It has been the spring of Christian art and poetry, of sacrifices and martyrdom. But it has been apt in some ages to end with itself, and to grow introspective and to lose itself in sentiment, so we have had the imitation of Christ without the service of Christ, Christ without His body. No practical movement again for the elevation and redemption of human life has been more hopeful or more efficacious than that of Christian charity; but in our day there is the danger that it should begin and end in action and have no spring of emotion. If the service of man is separated from the love of Christ, then it will grow hard, mechanical, unspiritual, and finally will fail as a plant without a root, as a river whose lake has dried up. It is the river of Christian service which has made green the wastes of human suffering, so far as its waters reach, but that river sprang from the Cross and the wounds of Jesus. It is a river whose water is mingled with blood, and therein lies its perennial strength.

It was for the love of Christ St. Philip Neri gave himself to the care of the lepers ; it was because they were living in the fellowship of Christ that the mystics of the middle ages—the "friends of God," as they were called—took charge of the poor. It was from Christ Wilberforce received his inspiration to deliver the slaves, and Shaftesbury his commission to work for the poor of England. What we need is not more statistics, or more committees, or more blue-books, or more money, what we need is more personal compassion and more personal sacrifice. When our hearts have been melted in the furnace of the love of Christ our lives will flow forth in service ; when we are in daily fellowship with our crucified Lord, we shall never fail to discern His suffering body.

> For a tear is an intellectual thing ;
> And a sigh is the sword of an Angel King ;
> And the bitter groan of a martyr's woe
> Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

XXIV

THE SOLIDARITY OF MAN AND GOD

"Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."—*Matt.* xxv. 40.

IT is frequently pointed out that the sense of sin is decreasing, and for this charge there is considerable evidence. Confession to God has not the former accent of self-abasement and of personal guilt. People do not sing the hymns of penitence with the same reality; a verse like this seems to strike an unreal note to the modern mind—

> I am all unrighteousness,
> False and full of sin I am,

and we weaken before an older and more strenuous hymn—

> Behold! I was shapen in iniquity,
> And in sin did my mother conceive me.

Literature is sombre to-day with the shadow of sin, but it is not so much repentance towards God as the nemesis of broken law, and while the

individual conscience is more sensitive about certain things than the conscience of the past, it shows very little of what the Friends call "contrition." Were the worship of the Church to be tuned to the key of personal consciousness it would have to be largely re-cast, and one hazards the guess that many people are silenced in worship just at the point where their fathers were most intense.

If this change in the attitude of devotion really means that our generation is indifferent to the distinction between right and wrong, and that the individual of to-day considers himself at liberty to do as he pleases, both with himself and his fellow men, then every one who believes in righteousness would have grave reason to despair. The decay of the moral sense is a calamity of the first order. When a person is without conscience, then any moral appeal to him is futile, and against him organized law itself is helpless. If there were many such people, the bonds of society would be dissolved.

Is it not possible, however, that the sense of sin has changed its form, and that the conscience of to-day, if not so tender on one side, is far

quicker on another? It may be granted that good people do not analyze their feelings towards God with the scrupulous care of former times, and do not charge themselves with the sublimated sins of defective emotion; that they do not describe their shortcomings unto God in terms of such humiliation, and that they are not afraid lest in loving some creature they should rouse the sensitive jealousy of God. We are not to-day saddened by the morbid child's religion of the former good books, nor by the pitiable diaries of self-tortured souls. It is to be remembered at the same time that our pious fathers would themselves have been ashamed to display the barbaric jealousy they considered it right to ascribe to God, and that while they included the whole range of human transgression in their confessions they would have been very indignant if their neighbours had accused them of a single sin. Side by side, however, with this decay in the consciousness of personal offence against God, there is a sense of obligation towards our neighbour which is distinctly in advance of anything known to our fathers. Prosperous men would consider it a disgrace to die enormously

rich, and the conviction is growing that after a man has made just provision for his wife and children, he should hold his means in stewardship for society. Employers of labour are solicitous about the condition of their working people, and are openly ashamed when it is discovered that they have been treating them badly. Persons with great privileges are in many cases sharing them with their less fortunate brethren, and the whole community is assuming a moral responsibility for the disease, vice, misery and ignorance of the masses. Under the influence of this new spirit sins which before were unidentified and unimagined are thrown into relief, and arrest the public conscience. The sense of sin against God as a transcendent person has weakened, the sense of sin against the great human body of which we are a part has awakened. Repentance is not dead, but it is now towards our neighbour whether in our own home or at the other end of the city. Social repentance is the latest development of the moral sense, and the conviction of social guilt was never so keen in any age.

Are we not apt to isolate these two moral

facts—the decay of the sense of sin against God, and the increase of the sense of sin against man? At least, we forget to correlate them; we assume that there is no unity in the religious life. By one set of acts we commit, as it were, divine sin, and by another human sin, or we render so many acts of divine service and so many acts of human service. One age is strong in the divine department of the religious life, and another age is strong in the human department. So we speak of those who do their duty to God and somewhat fail in their service to man, and others who do their duty well to man but are negligent in their service of God. Which is less than reasonable, and leads one to ask whether the conventional division of the law into two tables—love to God, and love to man—is more than a handy arrangement. Whether in other words you can hurt a man without hurting God, or can honour a man without honouring God. As knowledge grows, does it not always point towards unity? Moses gave ten commandments, Jesus condensed them into two in His teaching, and before He died He reduced the two to one, bidding His disciples love one another. Ought we not to take a pro-

founder view and regard social sin as an offence against the order of the universe, or in other words against God Himself and social service as a homage to God. Is God a distant and isolated deity outside His own creation, whom we do not touch when we touch a creature, whom we cannot serve when we serve a creature, whom we can only approach in the worship of the Church, and with whom we can only meet in the sanctuary of our souls? Ought we not to believe that God is within this creation so that one cannot separate any part of it from Him in whom every part lives and moves and has its being? Is He not in the world around us, and is He not in our fellow men? Is not the hem of His garment within reach of us all? Can we injure a little child and not injure Him? Can we help a man in the straits of life and not help Him?

Ought we to hesitate which idea of God to accept as our working principle in life? Is not the distant God a mechanical conception, and an obsolete deism? Is not the indwelling God a convincing idea and the religion of Jesus? Are we not taught by the Incarnation, which is the central doctrine of Christianity and the crown

of revelation, that God is within human life—speaking through human voices, working by human hands, weeping human tears, rejoicing with human joys? Was not Christ ever preaching this truth, and did He not conclude His Gospel by declaring in His parable of the judgment that whatsoever a man did of good to his fellows, was done to the Judge, and whatsoever he did of evil was done against the Judge? Within the sphere of Christian thought there is only one life, one love, one faith, one sin. We speak of the solidarity of man; since the Incarnation we should speak of the solidarity of man and God.

The truth that if you sin against man you sin against God is impressively stated in the most intense hymn of penitence ever written, the fifty-first Psalm. Whoever the writer was he had commited some great sin—a sin red with blood and black with lust. He was ashamed of himself and was broken-hearted. Some fellow creature had suffered cruelly at his hands, but when he went to the root of the matter he realized that his sin had touched God Himself, and that no creature could be insulted without wounding its creator. "Against Thee," he said, "against

Thee only have I sinned." If this be true, then it follows on the other side that if any one helps a human being in body or in soul, that person has helped God. If only the Psalmist had dealt righteously by that man or that woman, he had been able to say, "Thee only have I served." All service, as well as all injury, ends in God, and is done to God.

But some one may ask, where does this lead us? Is it meant that if one loves his neighbour after an unselfish fashion, say a mother her child, or a man his friend, that so far he is loving God? Certainly, just as if he were ill-treating any one he was sinning against God. But the motive? What if a person should say, I never thought of God, or should go on to say I do not know God? Or in the furthest extreme, I am no friend to God; there are reasons in my life why I almost hate God. Still the truth holds good, this agnostic in his ignorance, or his enmity, cannot escape God. He cannot love without pleasing God, and he cannot do good without worshipping God. Verify the truth in human life, which surely is the illustration and test of our relation to God. Suppose some one do service

to my son in a distant country, helping him in the hour of sorrow, or standing by him in the moment of danger, that man becomes my friend, and is dear to me. If he should land in this country and be in straits, I will hasten to his aid, and I would be ashamed not to recognize him. Do you say he did nothing to me? He did it to my son, and it is the same as if he did it to me. Do you say he knew nothing about me? He knew about my son. Suppose, to make the illustration complete, that, although he dealt kindly with my son, he does not like me, and that there has been a quarrel between us. There may have been a quarrel, but there is none now. On his side if he chooses he may keep it up, but on my side it is closed. Not only do I forget that he thought ill of me; I put it to his credit that, thinking ill of me, he has done so well by my son. If a person believes in God, and serves his fellow men, he does a good work, and he does it unto God. If he is not able to believe in God and yet serves his fellow men, behold in even harder circumstances, and with less encouragement, he has served God.

This truth should bring liberty to two opposite

people, and the first is a believer with a scrupulous conscience. There are Christians who are afraid of letting their heart go, and pouring forth their affection upon those they love, lest they should be giving to the creature what ought to be reserved for God. And good people have sometimes been so confused about the claims of God and man, that when a beloved child was taken away, the mother has tortured herself with the thought that the child died because it had been made an idol. Could there be a more atrocious slander on the character of our Heavenly Father, or a more grotesque misconception of the service of God? Would any earthly father bestow a gift upon his child, and then, when the child was delighted with it, tear what he had given from its hands, because, forsooth, the child had for the moment forgotten him? Do we expect our children to be for ever calling us by fond names, and to be for ever waiting upon us with assurances of devotion? Are we jealous of their engrossing occupations, or of their innocent joy? And is our Father in Heaven of meaner mind and crueller temper, and more exacting disposition, than an earthly parent? God is no watchful

rival, demanding the lion's share of our heart. He is content if we love, for all the love we give to those whom we see, we are giving to God whom we cannot see. And every stream of love finds its way at last into the eternal ocean of His heart from which first it rose.

This truth should also be liberty to the unbeliever with an honest mind. There are many persons in the land to-day, and within the Church, who hesitate to call themselves Christians because, as they confess, they have not what they judge to be a right mind towards God. It is not that they deny God; it is that they do not know God, and that they do not love God. They cannot love one whom they do not know, and God is to them simply the intelligence in the universe and the principle of life. They have nothing to do with Him, and He has nothing to do with them, and, therefore, they would not call themselves religious. And yet this non-religious man, who has made no profession of faith, and counts himself unworthy to approach the Sacrament, may be the most loyal of husbands and the most self-sacrificing of fathers, as well as a charitable citizen and a reliable friend. He did it all to his fellow-

men, my friend says, which shows some lack of imagination. But God—in this matter, if you please, a jealous and grasping Master — claims every act as done to Him. He has not known God, so my friend says, which is a serious loss of comfort. But there is something more important and decisive—God has known him, God is loving him, and in a day to come God is going to reward him.

XXV

DIVINE SERVICE A SPECULATION

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."—*Ps.* cxxvi. 6.

WHILE the world lasts nature will be the parable of grace, and the progress of the seasons will illustrate the history of the Kingdom of God. It may be assumed that God has a kingdom in this world, and that although it appears in different forms it can always be recognized; for it means the increase of knowledge, the spread of charity, the deliverance of the oppressed, the rescue of the fallen, the preaching of Christ's Evangel. We believe that God is calling us daily to cast ourselves into His work and to be fellow labourers together with Him for the redemption of humanity. Whether we obey this impulse or not we know that it is a breath of God's Spirit and a tide of the divine love.

There is nothing so beneficent in human life

as the cause of God, and no man would consciously take the other side. He may be hindered from putting his hands to the good work, but he would not wish to oppose it; he would give much to be among the labourers whom the Master will reward when the sun sets. Our faith fails at a later point, the survey of results. Righteousness and peace seem to make little headway; the nations come but slowly under Christ's rule; the vast machinery of religion has a disappointing output. Critics sitting in their armchairs and ridiculing every effort to improve the condition of mankind demand impossible results and fasten with greediness upon weak points. It is not easy to close their mouths as they sit upon the fence and jeer at the husbandman who is sowing his seeds on the cold March day. They seem to have the best of the argument, and it requires some courage to give one's self to the husbandry of God's Kingdom. The servants of God take what is valuable to them and might have been useful to many—their money, their time, their talents, their enthusiasm, their prayers, their love, and cast it away upon the most uncertain enterprise. Why did they not keep what they

possessed and put it to some more profitable purpose? Why did not the farmer keep the corn in his granary where he could hold it safe, why did he not sell it in the market place and come home with the price? Why did he fling it into the earth? Because he had imagination and foresight, courage and ambition, because he chose to embark on a great venture. When he cast the seed into the ground some might be eaten by the birds, foolish people will always reduce the value of one's endeavours; some of it might be trodden under foot, the world is not our colleague in religion; some of it might rot away, all one's work is not perfect. But the kindly earth will give a home to what remains, and in the end of the day the farmer will have an hundred-fold of increase. It is for the chance of that repayment he emptied his store-house and parted with the costly grain; it is for the chance of a lasting harvest that the spiritual husbandman expends his labours and endures his anxiety.

Were one restricted to three departments of beneficence as an illustration of hazardous and yet hopeful speculation he might take for the first Foreign Missions. Its pioneers were laughed

at in society, and lectured by the Church; they were hindered and persecuted; their passion for human souls and their splendid self-abnegation were neither welcome nor admired. That would have counted but little if they had been gladdened by success in their exile, but even this was not given to them any more than to Jesus. The first missionaries in China, India, Greenland, Africa, died almost without a convert, having, as it appeared, lived and toiled in vain. But these men laid the piles deep down out of sight on which the structure of a new religious civilization rests. We are now beginning to rescue their names and to recognize what those men who were judged in their day fools and fanatics have done for philology and anthropology, for geography and commerce, and most of all for religion. How slow again has been the progress of education, how bitter its controversies, how vast its outlay, how many have been its servants. And yet there are times when one can see but little good fruit, times when one is almost afraid the balance has been of evil. But the spirit of intelligence is spreading like leaven through the heavy mass of the people. Its signs are in

their homes, in the furniture of the rooms, and the paper on the walls, in the finer taste of artizans and the labour-saving improvements of machinery, in the wider interest in literature and art, in the growth of the secondary schools and the modern universities, in the establishment of free libraries and reading circles, and in the diffusion of a certain urbanity throughout almost every class of the community. The pioneers of temperance fought an unpopular and arduous battle, and none of the benefactors of society have suffered more through defeat and disappointment. They have been embarrassed by unfortunate measures, they have been weakened by intestine quarrels, they have worked under a play of ridicule, they have run counter to the customs of society, they have grappled with a masterful temptation. Evidence can be produced to show that there is no decrease in the statistics on drink and no improvement in the habits of the people, and every person who is not a raging optimist will admit that drunkenness still battens on the vitals of England. On the other hand it is beyond question that the nation as a whole is learning temperance and self-respect. Respect-

able persons are not intoxicated at dinner as the same class were two generations ago. The professions regard intemperance as a vice, so do the middle class and the lower middle, so also do the artizans. Drunkenness, except in cases where it is a disease, is now confined to the lowest class in the commonwealth, and there it is a misfortune as much as a vice. It is the result of misery, the pitiable revenge which neglected and homeless people are taking on the State. Temperance reformers have made mistakes and they have endured much, but they have not laboured in vain.

God's servants would not be discouraged if they remembered that beneficence has many conditions of success, and one of them is time. There are six months between seed time and harvest, between the going forth and the coming back in that speculation. You cannot hurry nature, neither can you hurry humanity. If time be necessary for the growing of corn it is far more necessary in the sphere of morals and religion. The Kingdom of God, whether in the individual or in a nation, grows slowly because lasting work can never be lightly done. Sow an

annual and in a few weeks it will be flowering; plant an acorn and in fifty years you may have an oak; a house can be erected in a month, a cathedral may require a century. But when the blossom of many seasons has been gathered beneath its shadow the oak will still be standing, and when the town has been re-built ten times over the cathedral will be lifting its head to Heaven. You can change the face of a country in ten years, but you cannot create an intelligent, temperate, industrious, thrifty people in less than three generations. Work for such high ends and on such spiritual lines must be without haste and without rest, and the first workmen must be content to leave their unfinished building to their successors. Force is no remedy here, it is rather a disaster. You cannot redeem humanity by the sword, you must change it by the spirit. Herein lies the difference between the kingdoms of the world and the Kingdom of God. Napoleon reduced Europe to a province of France in ten years. Jesus has been working in our midst for nineteen centuries, and is only beginning to have His way. You may remove by law every temptation to drunkenness in a year, but only the slow-spread-

ing spirit of self-respect and religion can create a temperate nation. You may compel every child to attend school, but it will take a century to inspire a nation with culture. Spiritual work is slow in the doing, but being done it stands. The Empire of Napoleon disappeared in a battle; the reign of Jesus extends with every year. The Kingdom of God comes slowly, quietly, surely, cleansing and beautifying the character of individuals, institutions, nations. "No man saw the building of the new Jerusalem, the workmen crowded together, the unfinished walls and unpaved streets; no man heard the clink of trowel and pickaxe, it descended out of Heaven from God."

But the spiritual husbandman should remember that if the rate of progress be slow the far result is already discounted, and that if he speculates it is not in the sense that he may lose altogether, but that he loses in the present in order to gain in the future. The farmer does not work alone in his great yearly effort; there is no man indeed who does so little for himself; he prepares the seed with care, and tills the soil into which it is to be cast; he waits for the proper time

of sowing, and then with generous hand he lets the seed go. After that he simply waits and leaves the rest of the labour to his High Partner; he alone of all workmen is in league with the unfailing and irresistible forces of nature. With faith and industry he does his little part, and then withdraws. Now the rain will water the man's seed and the sun will shine upon it, and the earth will nurture it in her motherly bosom. The winds will dry it and they will all work together to give that man his harvest. He trusts in nature, and nature does not play him false. Why cannot the spiritual worker trust in God? We have done our best for our fellow men. Is there no other one in the universe interested in goodness except ourselves? Is there no power outside ourselves making for righteousness? Is not the Throne of God established in faithfulness and truth and mercy? Did not Christ live in this world, and work in this world, and pray for this world, and die for this world? Has He not risen from the dead, and is He not on the right hand of God with all Power and Majesty? We are too modest, isolated, unimaginative, faithless. The tides of time and the forces of history are with us, the

principalities and powers in the heavenly places are upon our side.

Remember in moments of depression when your own work and that of your generation seems a failure, that the Kingdom of God has a long past. The history of commerce records how men have been willing to stake all they had upon one transaction in the hope of huge gain; the history of religion records how a greater multitude have risked everything for the good of their fellow men and the Kingdom of God. Theirs is the higher spirit and the further vision; theirs has been the master speculation of humanity. Time alone is arbiter of their wisdom, and time has already justified the venture of beneficence. Consider the Hebrew prophets who denounced iniquity in degenerate Jerusalem, and sustained the hopes of exiled Judah in Babylon. They died without seeing their protests effectual, or their prophecies fulfilled; twenty-five centuries afterwards their words have passed into the moral capital of the world. Consider the apostles of Jesus, that handful of Jews whom He charged with His spirit and who filled the Roman world with the sound of His Evangel. For their reward

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they had a few converts and the death on the Cross; but they became the authors of a new civilization, and they sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Consider the noble army of martyrs, from those who awoke the dead nobility of Rome to those who won our own freedom; how utter was their apparent defeat, how incalculable their real influence. Consider the honourable roll of men and women who have toiled in the cause of charity, purity, knowledge, freedom, science, and peace, amid insults, poverty, and endless opposition. They died, having only seen the day of promise afar off, and now we cherish their names in everlasting remembrance. Did they not all sow in tears, have they not all reaped their harvest? Above all let us consider Him to whom all the prophets pointed, whom all the apostles preached, for whom all the martyrs died, whose words were despised in His own day and whose honour was taken away, whose life was cast as a seed into the ground and was lost. Was ever such a wealth of goodness flung away, was ever such a failure seen? And now being raised upon the Cross He has drawn the ends of the earth to His feet, and every

day He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. With the bitterest tears ever shed our Lord went forth sowing His Precious Seed ; with the very joy of God He has come again, and for ever and for ever He will come, bringing His sheaves with Him.

XXVI

THE DUTY OF ENCOURAGEMENT

"When the brethren heard of us they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and The three taverns, whom when Paul saw he thanked God and took courage.—*Acts* xxviii. 15.

IT was only an incident in travel; as St. Paul journeyed from the seaport where he landed to Rome, where he was to be tried, certain brethren of the Roman Church came to meet him. It was only a courtesy in life; as he was Christ's apostle they desired to bid him Godspeed. But this gracious act is placed on record by the first historian of the Christian Church, because it is a beautiful illustration of the Christian spirit and because it was a reinforcement at a critical moment of Christ's servant. And on this incident I should like to make three remarks.

First it reminds us that even stalwart men sometimes lose heart. One is ashamed to confess it, but he is secretly relieved to know that this strong St. Paul with his buoyant courage and

high hopes, his forgetfulness of himself, and his devotion to the cause of his Master, did not always walk on the heights where the sun is shining and the soul is chanting songs of victory. He also was sometimes concerned about the unknown future and took a desponding view of his work, and felt weary of the struggle and was tempted to think that he had failed. If it comes as a surprise upon us weaker folk it is not depressing. We are rather inclined to say, "You, St. Paul, who have put councils to confusion, and faced angry mobs without losing nerve, who have endured the most arduous journeys and passed through the most extreme perils, who have sung hymns in dungeons and by your high heart have saved a ship's company from death, who have dared all things, and hoped all things, whose voice has been as the sound of trumpets and who have been a hiding place from the wind to your timid converts, you also have your dark days and a sinking heart. St. Paul, we humbler men are glad to know"—not glad, we must put it otherwise. "We are comforted to know"—even that is not the right word, there seems a touch of meanness in satisfaction. What we really feel

is something more tender and more becoming. "St. Paul, we have never come nearer thee, great heart, and never loved thee more than at Appii Forum. Thou art far and forever above us as a thinker and a writer, as an apostle and a martyr, and as a saint. But thou art a man of like passions with ourselves, who also hast passed through thy Gethsemane, and hast been afraid of the Father's cup."

Various causes contributed to St. Paul's depression on this occasion, and operate upon us all. One was his age, for he was now about sixty years old, and he had lived hardly. Twenty years ago he entered on his mission work, and the days had been packed full of labour, anxiety, persecution and suffering. According to some men's travail this man had lived a hundred years, and toil without ceasing is bound to tell. It is apt to take its revenge, not merely in weariness of the body, but also in sickness of the soul. One cannot retain past middle life and after years of strenuous service the high spirits and resilient spring of youth. Besides, like many another faithful servant of man and God St. Paul struggled all his life with a body

of humiliation, and robust people can not imagine the weight of this burden. No doubt a delicate body has its own compensation in freeing the mind from the bondage of the flesh, and refining it to receive spiritual ideas, in quickening a man to make the most of his time, and enriching him with the sense of the unseen world. But the invalid must be prepared for frequent failures of strength and even for occasional collapses of courage. You could not have met in a day's journey a frailer man than Christ's Apostle, who had recently landed from that terrible voyage and was now making a journey of one hundred and fifty miles on foot. When a man is tired and worn out he is not himself, and cannot be judged by his accustomed standard : his nerves are on edge and he loses the mastery of himself. Hope begins to wither within his heart and through the dimness of his eyes he sees a darkened world.

Circumstances also were against St. Paul that day, and no man can be indifferent to his environment. St. Paul was inflamed and devoured by ambition ; there never lived any one so ambitious for his Master Christ, and his brethren of mankind. It was not enough for the Apostle of the

Gentiles that he had planted the Cross in Antioch and Ephesus, Athens and Philippi, although that would have been a sufficient and final achievement for other men. The Cross was the symbol of Christ's victorious redemption, and it must be set on the highest place of the world, on the seven hills of Rome and above the throne of the Cæsars. For years he had longed to see Rome, and his desire was now being fulfilled. But not as he had imagined. The Apostle was not going to the Capital as a triumphant missionary, or even as a free Roman citizen ; he was going as a prisoner accused of sedition, he was going in bonds and disgrace. For his own dignity, or for his own comfort, he did not care, but he was continually concerned for the honour of Christ and the success of the Gospel. One aged prisoner was a sorry ambassador for Christianity in Rome, and a feeble auxiliary for the Church. Nothing crushes a man more swiftly than the sense of the greatness of his work, and of his own weakness. When he allows himself to brood on this subject he wishes that he had never attempted so weighty an enterprise ; when he thinks of the stronger men who might undertake it he asks himself whether he

ought not to lay down his charge. St. Paul did not make his moan in public, for he was one of those gallant souls who, like Browning's young soldier, hide their wounds and meet the world with a smile. But he was a discouraged man, and St. Paul in a low mood was a spiritual calamity to the Christian Church and to the Roman world.

From this incident we also discover that there were wise men in the Church of Rome—persons with insight and imagination, with understanding and affection. News had come to the little community meeting in some upper room that the Apostle of the Gentiles, of whose work they had learned so much, and who had written to them so powerful a letter was coming in person to visit them. True he was coming in bonds, but his bonds were a seal of his commission and a recommendation to their love. Some evening when they had met to celebrate the Sacrament it was announced that he had landed in Italy, and was on that high road to Rome by which so many travellers came and went. Then some Roman Christian had a gracious inspiration. He rose, and, to put things in our speech, he proposed a resolution, and this is how it ran, and I wish to God all motions

in the meetings of the Church were as heartening and as fruitful—" Inasmuch as Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ, and an apostle by the Will of God, is coming to Rome in bonds for the cause of the Gospel ; inasmuch as for many years he has laboured and endured for the sake of the Church and bears about in his body the marks of the Lord Jesus ; inasmuch as he sent us a letter building us up in faith and good works and has been himself a comforter of many ; it is hereby resolved that the Church at Rome shall send him a message assuring the said Paul that we are prouder of him in his bonds than if he had come in a chariot, and inasmuch as it may cheer him more that the message be delivered in person rather than inscribed on parchment, that a deputation of this Church go down to meet him on the way and greet him in the name of the Lord." Which being seconded by everybody was passed unanimously and carried into effect without delay. We are not surprised at this felicitous idea, for we know from the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans the graciousness and friendliness of the Roman Christians. One would have been glad to know who was its author, and to have the names of the

deputies, but like many other men who have built greater than they knew they remain simply "the brethren." They were brethren worthy of St. Paul's salutations in his letters, and worthy of the Master's name they bore.

For they understood one of the chief opportunities of life and used it splendidly—the opportunity of encouragement of which we could make so much but of which often we make so little. When a clerk in our office is looking weary we might ask what ails him and refresh him with a few days' rest. We might say to a servant who has been years with us that she has done well, and that her work has made a happier household. Occasionally we might assure a friend of our good will and of our high hopes about him in the battle of life. It were not amiss sometimes to let a minister know that his work has not been altogether in vain, or at least that you believe that he has done as well as he could. Perhaps a wife might be the better of a word of gratitude from her husband, and even the husband in his strength might be made stronger by his wife's praise. We are quick to criticise, and criticism has its own place in life; we are slow to cheer, and therein we

waste one of the resources of power given to us by God, and we lower the temperature of life. Believe me, men and women round us are hungering and thirsting for a friendly word, and a kindly greeting, and I care not whether they be high or low, they would count it a benediction. When one is so mighty that he is independent of kindness he ought to be removed to another world, for this one is not big enough to hold him. Be not afraid that any person is ever spoiled by friendliness, but there are thousands who despair because no one has spoken. It is a question whether all our searching criticism has ever done so much to produce efficient work and to bring our neighbour to his best, as words of genuine and hearty encouragement.

Finally this incident proves that Christianity is richer to-day for that word of good cheer. After a toilsome journey of more than a hundred miles St. Paul came with his guard to Appii Forum and looked wistfully round upon the crowd of canal boatmen, traders, labourers, and soldiers. Each man was busy with his own affairs, none knew him nor cared for his Lord. Some glanced at the prisoner in pity, some des-

pised him as a Jew, then every one went about his business. There was no known face to smile at him, no one to take his chained hand in a friendly grasp. He was alone, and there is no loneliness like that of a friendless man among a crowd of people. Was he forgotten of his Lord ? I judge it was the lowest moment of St. Paul's life, even worse than when he cried out to be delivered from the thorn in the flesh. Oh ! shame if this man be forsaken who is himself so true. Oh ! cruel if this man have no sympathy who has cheered the whole Christian Church. Suddenly the Apostle hears his name mentioned with accents of respect and love (and there is a vast difference between the way in which the world and your friend pronounces the same name). A little company is standing beside him. They are plain men and some of them have had their past, but they are carrying themselves well now, and they bear upon their faces the new likeness of Christ. "The brethren in Rome salute thee, Paul, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and they thank God for thy coming." So the spokesman began, and he conveyed the message of the Church ; then he stepped aside and one by one the good men, his companions, greeted

St. Paul and returned to him that day what he had done for them in the Gospel. Thirty-three miles they have trudged, poor men and hard working, to do the Apostle this kindness and to strengthen his hands. I seem to hear them speak, and I venture, from that catalogue in Rome, upon their names. "Beloved in the Lord," said Amplias; "Our helper in Christ Jesus," was Urbane's word; "The household of Aristobulas salute thee, Paul;" "the household of Narcissus send their greeting, Paul;" "Priscilla," this is Aquila speaking, "bids me salute thee, and the Church which is in our house;" "I also," cries Hermas, "and I, Herodion your own kinsman, Paul." After this fashion would they speak one by one; then the brethren kissed him and grouped themselves round him in honour and love.

It is not said that they brought any gift, although they may have made some slight provision for his journey. They had no order for his release, and they had no authority even to loose his chains. But they did all that was needful when they tramped that road with their word of welcome. As they delivered their souls I see the light come back to the Apostle's eyes, and the

quick warm blood rushing to his cheeks. I see him straighten himself and then break down, not now with threatened despair, but under the overwhelming burden of gratitude and joy. There was not living in the world that day a man who could appreciate more keenly this ministry of kindness. It lifted his soul from the depths to the height, it changed the whole face of the world and the future of his work. What mattered now to the Apostle the load of his sixty years or the tiresomeness of his labours, or the journeys by land and sea, or the prison and the scourging? What mattered the chain or the soldiers, the Emperor, or death itself? Nothing mattered after the salutation of the Roman brethren! What the soldiers saw was a handful of humble men, without riches and without power, what St. Paul saw was an embassy from a greater than the Emperor to bid him be of good cheer. If he was called to trying service, his Lord had remembered him, if he had to go up to Rome with a guard of soldiers he would also go with the body guard of Christ. After all, he was not going to make an unworthy entrance into Rome nor was the Cross of Christ to be put to shame. This was the answer

to his fears, and the consolation for his depression. And St. Paul thanked God and took courage.

Those worthy Romans could not know what a beautiful and beneficent work they had wrought. We know! If the Apostle came into Rome more like a conqueror than a prisoner and preached the Kingdom of God there to Jew and Gentile as it is written "with all confidence;" if he wrote letters like the joyful Epistle to the Philippians which have encouraged all ages of the Church, and if he bore himself with so high a heart in the barracks of the Imperial Guard that certain of Caesar's household were converted to the faith, we owe it in no slight measure to the act of those nameless Christians. What they could not do themselves they did by St. Paul, and perhaps our chief successes in this world shall be wrought by men whom we have encouraged. If a minister preaches with special power one day it was because of the grateful letter sent him by an unknown person. If a citizen achieves some good work for the commonwealth the credit shall be divided between him and the people who stood round him. Yes, and if a man does his duty bravely, year in and year out, and acquits himself well in the stewardship of life it is

because of the woman who thought of him and believed in him, and never loved him more or came nearer to him than in the hour when he was beaten. Life is heavy with burdens and sore with afflictions, but none of us need despair nor give up the struggle if there be one true heart to stand by us and say "Well done!" For Christ Himself is in the shadow behind our friend, and the word of good cheer has come from the heart of God.

XXVII

THE POWER OF OTHERWORLDLINESS

"The powers of the world to come."—*Heb.* vi. 5.

BY this impressive phrase "the world to come" we are not to understand a world which does not exist, but one which has not yet been revealed. It has come, but we have not come to it; it encompasses us but we have not yet entered into it. Cumulative evidence from various quarters, scientific, philosophical and religious, prove that besides the world of the senses there is another world of the spirit. It is the place where a man has stored both his lost treasures and his unattained ideals, where poetry and religion have their home, from which voices speak to us, and into which we send our prayers. As the sea takes its colour from the sky, so this present life is affected by the life to come. If a man believes in the unseen world he will think one way; if he does not, he will think another way. The men to whom this letter was written

had seen the destruction of Jerusalem, and the break up of the old order; they had gone forth believers in the heavenly city, and the high priest within the veil. Their faith was rooted in the spiritual world, and their lives were inspired by its power. And one may well inquire what influence a firm belief in that world is calculated to have on our character, our life, our work, and our hope.

First of all the world to come delivers us from the tyranny of the world which is. There are times, say when we are young and romantic, and there are moods, say of spiritual joy or of physical affliction, when we are lifted above the seen, and bid it defiance. As a rule, and especially as youth passes into middle age, we are apt to be mastered by visible things. We have an exaggerated reverence for rank, an insidious confidence in the value of money, a childish satisfaction in tangible honour, and an unceasing longing for an easy life. We may criticise the successful children of this world; do we not really envy them? We may speak contemptuously of its distinctions; is it not a cheap cynicism? We begin to feel it useless to struggle after impossible ends and are in

clined to conform to convention. This means both that the world which is has enslaved us, and also that the world which is to come has not touched us. If it had we should not have been dazzled by the glamour of the senses, and we should not have been shut up in this prison of time. Consider that Man who has most convincingly proved the existence of another world, and most radiantly illustrated its life. What was the attitude of Jesus to the world which passeth away? Not fierce conflict as of one round whose soul it was casting its tangling veil, nor cynical contempt as of one who had drunk its cup to the dregs. He was neither allured nor overwhelmed by this show because He had seen greater things. What did it matter that he missed its rewards; He had bread to eat of which it did not know. Or that Pharisees insulted Him; the angels were waiting upon Him. Or that men forsook Him; He was in constant communion with His Father.

Take His loyal follower and preacher St. Paul. Every man, it is said, has his price, but did any one believe in that day that there was any lure which could win the Apostle from Christ? One knows that St. Paul was impervious both to the seduc-

tion and assaults of the present because he lived under the influence of the future. What made him a free man, and gave him that liberty of indifference to the lower motives and the lower rewards, was not the depreciation of this world but the appreciation of the other. Nero had his own crown, and the heritage of Caesar was not to be despised, but St. Paul's eye was fixed on the crown of righteousness which fadeth not away. Flesh and blood did not desire to be cast out of synagogues, and immured in prisons, but St. Paul saw over against the present loss an exceeding weight of glory. The prisoner who wrote the epistle to the Philippians and was ever thinking of the things which are true and lovely was not likely to be dazzled or browbeaten by the surrounding paganism.

Again, the other world should strengthen us against the tedium of our present lot. For a minority of people life may be gay, amusing, and varied; for the majority it is afflicted with an intolerable sameness. They walk through the same streets and to the same office, go through the same routine and spend their evenings in the same way every day. It is dreariness which

drives many men to dissipation; they desire a garish variety in their experiences. And the same weariness tempts others to suicide. Years ago there appeared a sombre and powerful study of life in a French provincial town. It described the despair of a young man who had a good position and ample means, but who had only a few conventional duties, and no particular tastes. He grew tired of the same people, and tired of repeating the same round, and at last he grew tired of life; and so he bade it good-bye. It is not of necessity unmanly discontentment which frets the victims of monotony, it is the cry of the soul which is greater than its environment What we need in such circumstances is expansion; we must add another province. Inland nations have an unquenchable ambition for a seaboard; by an instinct they push their way towards the ocean. With only one port they would be in touch with the outer world; through that single avenue the commerce of distant lands could come. Their life would cease to be provincial, it would become imperial. When a commonplace life is touched with otherworldliness its poverty is redeemed and its limitations are broken. There

is nothing ordinary in it now, neither the cleaning of a kitchen nor the keeping of accounts, nor the making of a table, nor the writing of a letter. Every act is part of divine service, and is accomplishing the will of God, and this little life has now its outlook and its opportunity. If a young man's room be bookless, then one knows it is a place where he eats and drinks, smokes and sleeps. It is a contracting prison, twelve feet by twelve. But this other room where Shakespeare, and Carlyle, Browning and Scott, are standing on the shelf together cannot be measured with a tape, neither can its dweller's life be confined within three score years and ten. Every book is a window into the unseen. The walls of this room disappear, its roof is lifted and the man is an heir of eternity. One brave thought within the soul sets us free, one noble hope fills life with colour. There is not in literature a more pathetic figure than Faber's "Country Labourer."

He walked with painful stoop
As if life made him droop
And care had fastened fetters round his feet;
He saw no bright blue sky
Except what met his eye,
Reflected from the rainpools in the street.

And yet he was not the poor bond slave which appeared, for

> Always his downcast eye
> Was laughing silently,
> As if he found some jubilee in thinking;
> For his one thought was God,
> In that one thought he abode
> For ever in that thought more deeply sinking.

Should not also otherworldliness bring compensation for the hardships of this world? One is disappointed that social politics have not been widening the hearts of the people, and kindling within them a loftier ambition. The ideal state seems to be bounded by the market place, and the higher end to exhaust itself in the creation of a bread and butter paradise. It is urged that the preaching of the world to come has prevented men making the most of the world which is. Christianity is accused of so dazzling men's eyes with the glory of the heavenly city that they are careless how their brethren are living in the earthly city. Perhaps the preachers of the past were apt to forget that life is one in this world and that which is to come, and that the Kingdom of God must be established here though its glory may be seen hereafter. If that be so the pendulum has

swung to the other extreme, for the teaching of public men has grown secular and the outlook of the pulpit is too much bounded by time. To-day people say "What does it matter about the world to come? Let us see that we have comfort in the world which is. But the question arises, Can we satisfy men without the unseen world? Suppose one has perfect health and the full capacity of enjoyment; that he has been endowed with large resources and lives in an agreeable surrounding, that he has won a woman's love and is blessed by a well-doing family—that in short he has every gift of this present life. What about his soul if there be no other world? Has it not instincts which reach into the unseen? Does the man not long to see what is over the crest of the hill? Has he not demands which can only be answered by the Eternal? But that man has really been treated with exceptional favour, and is not representative of his brethren. There are other cases with a different fortune, and one wants to know what is to be done for them if you rule out the world to come. What are you going to do for the martyrs of incurable diseases, for the poor who can never be entirely relieved, for widows whose husbands

have been taken in the midst of their days, for the victims of loveless marriage, for lonely girls fighting the hard battle of life, for people with secret troubles which they may not tell, for the men who have made a disaster of their career? The immense suffering of this present life demands consolation somewhere; the glaring injustice of the present cries out for compensation in the future. People who have had no chance here must have a chance hereafter, and those who have had no joy here must have their share of joy hereafter. If a man be satisfied with the present world let him remain outside God's Paradise,

> . . . Let such men rest,
> Content with what they judge the best.
> . . . Take thy world! Expend
> Eternity upon its shows,
> Flung thee as freely as one rose
> Out of a summer's opulence,
> Over the Eden barrier whence
> Thou art excluded. Knock in vain!

But do not take the hope of the world to come from broken hearts, from the toiling sempstress, from the weary labourers, from the tempted saint, from the seeker after God. Let its power still come to those who toil and suffer, the reinforcement of

a great hope and the sure promise of an abundant consolation.

Once more, does not the other world exercise its power over us through the departed? Have not those whom we love and have lost awhile a more pervasive influence than when they were with us? Never does one fully appreciate a mother's unselfish care till she is gone, or comprehend a father's wisdom till we look at him from a distance. Jesus Himself was not known till he left this world, and He is still growing in the admiration of the race. Through those who were once members of our homes, and are now in the Father's House, the unseen comes near and touches us. The lands are strange to us where we know none of their inhabitants; distant places grow familiar where our friends are living. If a mother has a son in a foreign country she is so far a skilled and accurate geographer. She has gone to school and love has been her teacher, and so she knows the contour of the coast, the names of the cities, the lines of the rivers, and the character of the climate. She has sent out her heart to take possession of this unseen place and she often fancies that she is living there. When one has

left our home and entered within the veil, Heaven ceases to be strange; when most of our friends have passed over, then this world becomes strange. We enter into the experience and the longing of St. John, when all whom he knew and loved in the days of Galilee, and with whom he worked and suffered in the Gospel, had entered in through the gates. He also wished to go to rejoin his mother Salome, his brother St. James, the Blessed Virgin whom he had counted as his mother, and his fellow apostles, but most of all his friend and Lord. "Even so," he prayed, "come quickly, Lord Jesus." Otherworldliness is not unfaithfulness to this world, for only he whose soul is inspired by heavenly motives can do his duty on earth. It is not cowardice to recall to our conscience the hour when we shall stand on the threshold of another world, for by its standard we must be judged. Nor is it false sentiment to sustain our hearts amid this present toil with the hope of the rest which remaineth for the people of God. It is the homing instinct of the soul.

XXVIII

THINGS WHICH REMAIN

"And this word yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."—*Heb.* xii. 27.

THERE is no situation in the affairs of the Church which has not already arisen and no crisis in the experience of the soul through which some believer did not pass long ago. No disaster to religion and no revival; no affliction of the individual and no deliverance but have their parallel in the sacred record. And this fact is charged with comfort for the present generation. Our day is one of peculiar trials for the Church because faith itself seems to be cast into the melting pot and no one is sure what may come forth. Doctrines which had been placed on a level of certainty with the axioms of Euclid have been flatly denied; customs of the spiritual life which had grown into commandments have been condemned, modes of worship

around which affection had clung like the kindly ivy on a building have been swept away. So many things have been criticised, and so many have been abolished, that quiet people are gravely alarmed and inquire whether anything is going to be left. Possibly the new house may be larger and handsomer, but one does not relish the middle passage when the old building is being torn down with noise and dust. Without doubt many things are being removed because they have been shaken; are there any things which never shall be removed because they cannot be shaken?

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews answers this reasonable question by laying down two principles of development in the life of faith. And the first is the principle of change. Change is not a calamity but a condition of progress. There are things which ought to be removed because they are not perfect. They are temporary, not eternal; they are useful, but provisional; they are preparatory, but not final. They are the scaffolding and not the building, and although the scaffolding must be put up first and the building cannot be erected without it, the day comes when the scaffolding has to be taken down and

then the building is revealed. The stalk and the ear are needful for the kernel, but in the harvest time the stalk will be cut and the ear threshed and the corn, separated from the chaff, will be stored in the granary. Change is simply another word for growth, and if this principle were to cease, then life both in the Church and State would dwindle and decay. Without change history need not be written, for there would be nothing worth recording, and religion would end because it had been petrified.

We ought not to make too much of our trial or to suppose that a strange thing has befallen us. Hereditary piety and intellectual courage were never more keenly tested than when a pious Jew who had accepted Jesus as the Messiah of God was invited to part with Judaism, and to commit himself to the new rites of Christianity. It was a hallowed world of religious usage into which a Jew had been born, and when by the preaching of Christ's apostles, and the action of Christ's spirit in his mind, this world so dear and familiar had been taken down, for the moment he seemed to be homeless. No doubt the shell had been broken that the newborn creature might pass into liberty,

but the transformation was an immense surprise. Before any one complains of the shock of new ideas let him imagine the perplexity of a Christian Jew. For him the Temple of Jerusalem, the system of sacrifices, the order of the Aaronic priesthood, the religious feasts of the year and the social customs of his people, as well as their divine supremacy and their national seclusion had been abolished. From his heritage of the past nothing was left except commandments and prophecies; for even God Himself, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, although still the living God, had shown a new face to his soul and revealed another purpose of action in the world.

It was a cruel wrench for him to part with Judaism, but our author argues with persuasive force that Judaism was only one form of faith, and that its day was over. Its sacrifices had impressed the loathesomeness of sin upon a semi-barbarous people, but it was high time that the sacrifices of blood should cease, and should be replaced by Jesus' sacrifice of obedience. Regulations which preserved the purity of Jewish blood and manners served a good end so long as the Jewish people were the guardians of the divine

revelation, and were being prepared to be the missionaries of the world. But when the fullness of time had come and that revelation had to be given to all nations, those offensive barriers must be abolished. Hebrew ethics have been the foundation of the best morality, but when they sank into the pedantry of the Scribes and Pharisees, kindly death was at hand. Judaism was worn out, not because it was not of God, and had not done its part, but because it had done its part and because God did not need it any more ; not because it had no meaning, but because its meaning was Christ. The change from Judaism to Christianity was a fulfilment.

One must also sympathize with the pious Catholic of the sixteenth century who passed from the Roman into the Protestant world. It is surely a crude and unbelieving idea to hold that the centuries of the papal power were only evil and had no part in the divine plan. Did not the Pope succeed to the throne of the Caesars, and constitute a centre of authority when society was breaking into pieces ? Did not Rome conserve the civilization of the race when humanity seemed doomed to destruction ? Did not Rome build

up the intellectual creed of the Christian Church and elaborate her theology? Was she not the protector of women and children, the judge between kings and the sanctuary of the oppressed? As Judaism had been a servant to bring men to the school of Christ so the Roman Church was a tutor teaching the elements of Christianity, laying down rules rather than giving principles, and using pictures which are not needed when men come to their majority. And in more recent times Rome has succeeded with aboriginal people, as for instance the Indians of the Pacific coast as well as on the Canadian border. But the most loyal Romanist must have seen in that century what St. Paul detected in Judaism of the first century, that the system had grown corrupt, that the doctrines were fossilized, that the confessional had ceased to be an aid to morals, that worship had sunk into a tawdry symbolism. Parental control suitable for the age of childhood had become a tyranny for manhood. The Reformers may have done their work with too slight an historical sense, and too little regard for those to whom religion itself passed away with the pageantry of the mass, the cult of the Virgin and the

kindly offices of Mother Church, who cherished her children from their birth to their death, but was fain to keep them tied always to her apron strings. But the full time had come for the Church to advance into knowledge and freedom, and the departure in the sixteenth century has told unto this day for truth and righteousness.

Among the chief causes of the Reformation in the sixteenth century was the new learning. Erasmus and his fellow scholars in New Testament literature created the spirit which Luther and Calvin utilized, and if we be in the throes of another Reformation, then the original cause is again the revival of knowledge. It was the prophets culminating in John Baptist who prepared the way for Christ's first coming and scholars who prepared the way for that second coming, and now men of letters and men of science have been the forerunners of a third departure. As soon as the spirit of literary criticism awoke in the early part of last century when the war drum had ceased to beat, it was certain that sooner or later the new light which had played round the pagan classics would fall on Holy Scripture. For more than half a century

criticism has been doing its best not to re-write but to re-edit the Bible, not to reduce but to reset it. Physical science came in the second half of last century to its kingdom and it was inevitable that discoveries regarding the ways of God in creation should be related to the creeds of Christianity, not for the destruction of truth, but for its clarifying. With the growth of the democracy still another element of change came into being, and it was only a question of time when the Sermon on the Mount with its pervasive social principles would demand a place in the creed. It was inevitable that the action of such forces—literary, scientific and social—should tell upon the form of Christianity. We have learned that the authority of Holy Scripture lies not in the letter but in the spirit, and that the comfort which the Book contains for the soul is in no way bound up with questions of date and authorship but flows from God Himself. What forms certain doctrines about the origin of man and about his future may take during the course of this century no one can tell, nor can any one prophesy what may be the application of Christ's teaching to the arrangement of society. It is inevitable that creeds which

represented the mind of the past should grow old, and that new ideas should demand their just place. We cannot but be concerned when the old passes; we cannot but welcome the new with a certain apprehension. Our regret is a tribute to the good which the former fashions ministered; our apprehension is the wholesome diffidence with which we go out upon an untrodden track. But the facts of revelation stare us in the face and we recognize the sweep of the law of progress. Things are being removed because they have been shaken.

The acceptance of the principle of change prepares us to appreciate the principle of permanence. Certain things remain because they cannot be shaken. Amid all the variations of the animal world the type is preserved; through his long ascent from the beginning of human history man is still man; the nation may pass through many kinds of government but the national existence is untouched. And the Kingdom of God in the days of the patriarchs and the kings, as also in the days of Jesus and His apostles, is still one, and, as the writer assured those anxious Jewish Christians, would be more vast and splen-

did when it burst its provincial bonds and as a spiritual state extended to the ends of the world. For Christianity stands not in any temporary form of thought or rite of worship, but in God our Father and in Jesus Christ His Son. Whose mind has informed the processes of nature? Whose hand has guided the history of the race? Whose love has been revealed to the individual in a thousand mercies and deliverances? No man can examine his life with insight and believe that he has been merely the plaything of forces, a straw on the resistless current, an orphan on the high road of time. God has been behind all those shifting scenes, half hiding, half revealing Himself, near unto them that call upon Him in sincerity, never putting to confusion any that trust in Him. This has been the discovery of the saints, this has been the comfort of the meek and lowly—God remaineth.

As the centuries advance He came out from the shadow, and the veil passed from His face till our Father in Heaven was clearly revealed in Jesus Christ. In Christ is gathered the life of the kingdom and the sum of religion; He is the author and finisher of faith. Unto Him the saints looked

forward, and in the expectation of Him they died. It was Christ all the rites of the Old Testament dimly shadowed, and in Him they were fulfilled. Unto Him the prophets pointed and through Him their hopes were realized. Doctrines are but the faint expression of His activity, and if, like withered leaves, they fall to the ground, because they have served their season, the tree will clothe itself afresh in another spring. The leaves flourish and fade, the tree standeth and liveth. It was Christ who created the Bible, not the Bible who created Christ. It is not the New Testament which assures us of Him, it is He who gives power to the New Testament. One disadvantage of past days was that the Bible and creed, and even traditions, were placed on a level with the Lord Himself; one advantage of the present day is that the shaking of the things which are moveable has thrown into relief Him who cannot be moved. If other subjects of faith perish from our grasp we cling more closely to Him who changeth not.

Hundreds of years before Christ some Hebrew shepherd wrote out of the wealth of his personal experience as he watched over his flock, "The Lord is my shepherd." He had pierced through the soil of

fleeting circumstances and outward appearances to the everlasting rock, to the heart and source of all things. The wisest man of his day never discovered anything so true as that; the strongest man possessed no fortress so impregnable as that; the richest man had no treasure to be compared with that. He needed not to fear time nor change who composed the Twenty-third Psalm. Come to our own day and to our own country. Visit some cottage in a highland glen on a Sabbath morning, when within the lowly home they are gathered for family worship. The old shepherd who for many a year has been guarding his master's sheep through the winter's storms, more dangerous to them and him than the wild beasts are to the flocks of the East, is giving out a psalm, and this is what he reads with reverent affectionate accents.

> The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want,
> He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green; He leadeth me
> The quiet waters by.

Two shepherds separated by time and that wider gulf which divides the East from the West which, they say, can never be closed. They are

men of different blood, different education, different history, different circumstances. Yet they have one experience, one faith, one consolation, because they have one God. There are only two points of agreement between the men ; they belong to the same race and they have proved the loving-kindness of the same God. Three thousand years between, as well as land and sea, but there is no change in the faithfulness or the compassion of God, " Who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

XXIX

THE ETERNITY OF THE UNSEEN

"For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."—2 *Cor.* iv. 18.

NO man was ever more religious than St. Paul, none was more conscious that religion must be an enigma to the world. Worldly people could appreciate the Apostle's sufferings, they could not imagine his hope. They saw the vessel driving on the rock, not the passage into the landlocked harbour; the runner in his mid course, not his goal; the scale on earth filled with affliction, not the other in Heaven weighed down with glory. They saw the Cross, but not the Christ, and therefore they counted the Christian career madness, as any effect must be a mystery apart from its cause. Whatever is within the province of sight the world understands, whatever belongs to faith is outside its range. It was therefore the habit of the Apostle to rein-

force faith by magnificent references to the unseen, and it was because he saw the things which are at God's right hand, that St. Paul achieved his life's victory.

We begin life with an illusion that there is nothing but the seen, and we are vastly impressed by this physical panorama which passes before us from our earliest days. We do not understand that it is only the symbolical veil of another world. The prizes which awaken our ambition are those which eye hath seen, the goods which we value most are those which our hands can hold, and the applause which cheers us is that which our ears can hear. First that which is natural, and afterwards that which is spiritual, and it is only after we have grown accustomed to our physical home that we begin to ask questions about what is beyond. When we are wearied with our toys, or when some of them have been broken, we make like restless children for the window, and see in the larger life the reality of those things with whose petty images we have been playing in our little room. As time goes on voices from another world fall upon our ear, and friends pass through the veil. Changes

occur which cannot be explained from this side, and the sense of the unseen awakes in our mind. We begin to believe both in the shadow and the substance, but it is the seen which is the substance, the unseen which is the shadow. There is some other world, but this is the real world. Our training goes on, for faith is a long education, and with slow steps we reach another stage. We are finally convinced that the seen is the shadow which vanisheth away, and that the unseen is the substance which remaineth.

Every man must come to this belief in his own way, sometimes through a book or a word, sometimes through a sorrow or a sin, but faith is confirmed by a variety of evidence which is consistent and converging. We revel for instance in the exuberant abundance of summer, but where were roses yesterday, and where shall they be to-morrow? They have appeared and will disappear, but we shall live in hope of another summer, for the flowers are but the garments, often changed, of a pulse of life which is beating through all the years. What an impressive spectacle is a great city with its miles of streets, and its line of docks, and its vast warehouses,

its crowds of people, its public institutions, its stored riches, its corporate life. What created this place? Do you answer capital? You had better go farther back and say brains. The chief force is not material, but spiritual; it is mind. Able men turned a village into a city, and if the whole fruit of their skill and enterprise were laid in ruins, other men like them could reconstruct their work. Again, cities as great as Liverpool are to-day a waste, and yet their very stones are dear to the human race, and their name is written in history. They have bequeathed a heritage which cannot die, and which has made human life richer. Neither their ships nor their palaces, neither their gold nor their silver have remained. What endureth is some book into which a writer has put his life blood. The traders have passed away with all their treasures, the prophet remains with his message, the lasting glory of the forgotten city.

Or take the mystery of human affection. Two people love one another when the eye is bright, and the cheek is red. Years pass, with their burden of labour and their discipline of trial; the hair is grey now, and the form bent; but

they who loved once with the passion of youth are dearer than ever to one another. Love outlasts youth and beauty and circumstances; love will outlast death itself. We see the long procession of the race, the multitude no one can number, who were born and lived, who suffered and died. It seems as if everything were in a state of flux, and there was nothing to connect the past with the present. We look more closely into the experience of the race, and we discover that through all the generations one has remained, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Our forefathers spake another tongue, and looked out upon a different world. But they called upon the same God, and put their trust in the same love. He is the bond of continuity between us and those behind us, between us and those before us. He is the dwelling-place of His people in all generations. What He was to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob He is to us, and He will be to our children after us. We look back to our fathers, they have gone; we look round on life, it is ever shifting; we turn to God whom no man hath seen or ever can see. He standeth fast. The Eternal changeth not.

With most of us the conclusive evidence of the unseen is Jesus Christ. It was not possible for the Jewish race of that day by any principle of evolution to have produced him. He came from elsewhere. No one has ever lived after His fashion, with such becoming perfection. He belonged to elsewhere. Death did not bury His life, it remains unto this day the chief moral energy in the world. He went elsewhere. While He moved among men He condemned this world as when the sun puts out our rushlight; He suggested that other world where the hopeless ideals of this life are fulfilled. His biography breaks the bonds of sight, it lays the foundation for faith. His life, according to the reckoning of the seen, was thirty-two years, according to the higher reckoning it is eternal. Suppose, as certain drastic critics have allowed themselves to suggest, that He only left some half-dozen sayings, is there any force in the world which has wrought so much? Have they not changed the destiny of the race? Pontius Pilate and the rest of them, Pharisees, Jews and Romans, who loomed so large in that day, where are they? Gone like a dream. Christ, who seemed such a

thing of weakness, where is He not, what has He not done? With his eye on the triumphant Christ, St. Paul faced the menacing Roman world undismayed; he bids us face our world with the same high heart, for the things which are seen are temporal, the things which are unseen are eternal.

If the unseen be eternal, then it follows that character is more than life. It may be a little before we realize that this world is temporal, and behind it is God. It will be a little longer before we realize that in us only one thing counts, and that is the soul. Through all changes of youth and age, riches and poverty, it remains, and more important than everything that happens to us is its character. On the soul are being engraved certain lines, and however it may be washed by the ebb and flow of life, those lines endure, and they are the man. We say, Who is he? and we are informed about his birthplace, his education, his business, his position. Those are only the outer covering of the man; if you desire to reach him you must do as the children with their nest of boxes. You must strip him of his name, his family, his means, his standing,

his profession, his very body, which are so many perishable envelopes, till you come at last to the core of all, that which is inseparable from the man, and imperishable, the soul. From all present circumstances one may be dissociated any day, and certainly he will some day be torn by the hand of death, but no divorce is possible between the man and his soul. They are identical and eternal. Is there anything more heartening than a man standing alone, and unconquerable in his integrity. "I have nothing," he says, "but my character, and that I will not lose." Nothing! It strikes us then that he has everything. Is there anything more ironical than a man having everything that the world can give him, and a mean soul. Everything! it strikes us he has nothing. When life comes to an end with whom would we exchange souls, with Jesus dying penniless or with the man of the big barns whose soul was required of him?

If the unseen be eternal, it follows also that spiritual character should be our chief ambition. The duties of life are many, but none are so pressing as the culture of the soul, and it is not necessary in order to discharge it that any one

should separate himself from the common life of mankind. This were a misunderstanding of the relation between the seen and the unseen, which is the same as that between the material and the spiritual in the Sacrament. It is through the seen we realize the unseen, and by the temporal we are prepared for the eternal. For any one, whether Catholic or Protestant, to seclude himself in order to educate his soul is refusing the bread and wine of the Sacrament in order that he may more surely obtain the body and blood which they represent. It is despising the means in order to obtain the end. This world is the school wherein we are trained for the world to come. It is our experience of the earthly home which fits us for the heavenly family; our training in secular business which initiates us into God's high service: our daily obedience which tempers our nature for God's Kingdom. The occupations of this life are the servants of the soul, the suffering of this life is its discipline. The men who have made the most splendid progress in spiritual things are those who have devoted the resources of this world to the service of the soul. If it has happened that some have had the world at

their feet and allowed it to conquer them, it has also happened that some whom this world had ill-used have harnessed it to their chariot, and made it speed their soul more quickly to Heaven. When any large and lasting building is being erected it is surrounded, and almost hidden, by lofty scaffolding. Within this shelter the pile is rising, and when it is finished down will come the perishable screen. What the scaffolding is to the building so this life is to the soul. Circumstances are the means by which the soul is shaped, they are the cover within which God works. He who confounds the passing with the eternal has made one of the great mistakes of life. He who does not avail himself of the education which the passing gives, has made the second mistake of life.

It remains with us to choose whether we shall lay the emphasis on the temporal or the eternal, and in the last issue this is a question of sight versus faith. He who walks by sight will choose what is seen, and he who walks by faith, what is unseen, and the reward will be according to the choice. The one will receive in full measure the things which can be seen, but which in the using

vanish away, and the man of faith shall have for his fortune the things which eye hath not seen, but which remain for ever. Years ago the English Academy and the French Salon contained at the same time two pictures, which, if they had been painted for the purpose could not have been a more perfect illustration of St. Paul's great utterance. In one the king is lying on his bed the moment after death; he was the mightiest monarch of his day, and the sceptre has just dropped from his hands. And behold, the servants who an hour ago trembled at his look are rifling his treasury and dividing his possessions. Below with fine irony was written the title, *William the Conqueror*—his conquests had ceased. In the other a man is lying in a rocky tomb: His conflict is over, and His enemies have won. He denied the world and the world crucified Him; He trusted in God and God left Him to the cross. But love has wrapped His body in spices, and given Him a new tomb amid the flowers of the garden; love is waiting till the day breaks to do Him kindness. The Angels of God and not the Roman soldiers are keeping guard over Him while He takes His rest, after life's travail. When

the day begins to break He will rise conqueror over death and hell, Lord both of this poor world which passeth away, and of the riches of the world which remaineth for ever.

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